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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

JOINT APPLIED PROJECT

USMC CONTINGENCY CONTRACTING FORCE: AN ANALYSIS OF TRANSIENT OFFICERS IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING ACQUISITION ENVIRONMENT

June 2016

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**USMC CONTINGENCY CONTRACTING FORCE: AN ANALYSIS OF
TRANSIENT OFFICERS IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING ACQUISITION
ENVIRONMENT**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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USMC CONTINGENCY CONTRACTING FORCE: AN ANALYSIS OF TRANSIENT OFFICERS IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING ACQUISITION ENVIRONMENT

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	Assistant Deputy Commandant
AMOS	additional military occupational specialty
AO	approving official
AOR	area of responsibility
APEX	Adaptive Planning and Execution System
AT&L	Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics
BIC	billet identification code
CAR	Contract Action Report
CCF	Contingency Contracting Force
CCLEB	Commandant's Career-Level Education Board
CCM	contracting competency model
CCO	Chief of Contracting Office
CLP	continuous learning point
CONUS	continental United States
COR	contracting officer representative
CORT	Contracting Officer Representative Tool
COTS	commercial off-the-shelf
CPIB	Commandant's Professional Intermediate-Level Education Board
DAU	Defense Acquisition University
DAWIA	Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act
DC	deputy commandant
DOD	Department of Defense
DoDI	Department of Defense instruction
DON	Department of the Navy
ECP	Expeditionary Contracting Platoon
EDA	Electronic Document Access
eMIPR	Electronic Military Interdepartmental Purchase Request
FAP	fleet assistance program
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
FITREP	fitness report

GCC	Ground Combatant Commander
GCPC	Government-wide Commercial Purchase Card
HCA	Head of Contracting Activity
HQMC	Headquarters Marine Corps
I&L	Installations and Logistics
IDP	individual development plan
IGO	Inspector General's Office
iRAPT	Invoice, Receipt, Invoice, and Property Transfer
JP	joint publication
KO	contracting officer
LPC	Logistics Policy and Capabilities Branch
MARADMIN	Marine Administration Messages
MARCORSYSCOM	Marine Corps Systems Command
MARFOR	Marine Corps Forces
MARSOC	Marine Forces Special Operations Command
MCI	Marine Corps Installations
MCO	Marine Corps order
MCRP	Marine Corps reference publication
MDAP	Major Defense Acquisition Program
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MET	mission essential task
MLG	Marine Logistics Group
MOS	Military Occupational Specialties
NAVSEA	Navy Sea Systems Command
NMOS	necessary military occupational specialty
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
OCOC	Operational Contracting Oversight Cell
OCONUS	outside continental United States
OCS	operational contract support
OJT	on-the-job training
OPFOR	operating force
OUSD	Office of the Under Secretary of Defense

PD2	Procurement Desktop-Defense
PMOS	primary military occupational specialty
PR	purchase request
RCO	Regional Contracting Office
SABRS	Standard Accounting, Budgeting, and Reporting System
SAT	systems approach to training
SF	standard form
SPAWAR	Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command
SPS	Standard Procurement System
T&R	training and readiness
T/O	Table of Organization
TIPS	Three Integrated Pillars of Success
USAASC	United States Army Acquisition Support Center
USMC	United States Marine Corps
VTIP	Voluntary Transfer Incentive Program

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I. INTRODUCTION

The contracting capability within the United States Marine Corps (USMC) resides within a high demand, low-density labor force that currently faces officer corps staffing deficiencies, degrading the level of contracting support provided to operational forces and installation activities at all levels of operations. Under USMC field contracting protocols, officers must rotate between contracting billets in the Contingency Contracting Force (CCF) and their primary military occupational specialty (PMOS) on a standard three-year rotation cycle in order to maintain proficiency in their PMOS and to stay competitive for promotions. This rotation causes a lack of continuity in an officer's growth within the highly technical field of contracting, degrading experience levels and leadership oversight capabilities of contracting activities. Additionally, officers are not required to return to the contracting field upon completion of an initial tour in the CCF nor are they incentivized to do so. This break in continuity is not the case for enlisted Marines serving in the CCF as they are re-designated into a new PMOS as 3044 Contingency Contract Specialists upon their accession into the CCF.

In 2015, the CCF officially underwent a realignment to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiencies in support provided to fleet and installation commands. The CCF is structured and trained to provide an operational contract support (OCS) capability to support the Marine Corps expeditionary mission (Department of the Navy [DON], in press). The focus is on the expeditionary mission, yet training and sustainment on garrison contracting actions lends proficiencies to the performance of the CCF. Additionally, contracting provides the supported commander with the benefit of having a robust logistics capability, overcoming shortfalls within the Department of Defense (DOD) organic logistical system and providing solutions to the limited space available to transport required supplies (United States Marine Corps [USMC], 2009). This robust capability can only exist when CCF professionals have the requisite knowledge and experience to tap into the multitude of contracting support venues that enable procurement of supplies and services necessary to meet mission requirements worldwide. The officer corps within the CCF is central to this process, ensuring the CCF

meets the requirements of its mission through proper training and employment of CCF personnel, yet the current officer structure faces critical shortfalls for the foreseeable future despite the efforts of the CCF realignment. These critical shortfalls have the potential to persist if the Marine Corps fails to identify and address root causes to problems that negatively impact the health of the CCF officer corps. It appears the Marine Corps failed to address these problems when planning the CCF realignment, and they will continue to plague overall CCF performance until such time that they are addressed.

A. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research is to assess impacts of the CCF realignment relevant to the CCF officer corps, identifying potential critical vulnerabilities that exist under the new contracting structure employed by the Marine Corps, and to subsequently make recommendations for corrective actions to restore health to the CCF officer corps. The focus areas of interest are training, career path, and manpower deficiencies as there appears to be a link between these areas of interest and an inability of the CCF to execute its mission efficiently.

B. SCOPE

This research was supported by a thorough literature review, DOD Inspector General's Office (IGO) report findings, solicitation of survey feedback, and an analysis of the CCF officer corps structure within the Marine Corps utilizing Professor E. Cory Yoder's Three Integrated Pillars of Success (TIPS) Model, as identified in *Phase Zero Contracting Operations* (Yoder, Long & Nix, 2012). Use of the TIPS Model kept the scope of the research focused in order to dissect and define potential root causes to problems within the following areas as it pertains to the CCF officer corps: Personnel, Protocol, and Platform. Thereafter, research findings were used to assess potential critical vulnerabilities within the focus areas of interest.

The analysis conducted under the personnel pillar focused on the current capability of the CCF officer corps to effectively and efficiently meet operating force requirements while determining impacts on total mission readiness. This analysis also

included appropriate accession pipeline considerations for officers to enter into the CCF. The protocol pillar included an analysis of the doctrine that establishes the entry criteria for officers in the CCF within all service components and the impacts associated to the transient nature of officers serving in Marine Corps CCF billets. The protocol pillar analysis also included review and recommendations for an appropriate career progression roadmap for officers in the CCF. Finally, the analysis of the platform pillar included a review of required systems access, training requirements, and an evaluation of technical proficiencies achieved by officers during a contracting tour. Outcomes of this analysis were used to reflect the detriment to the CCF when transient officers are absent for three years or greater.

C. METHODOLOGY

The research attempted to meet the project objective utilizing a qualitative research strategy. The research started with the conduct of a thorough literature review of pertinent documents pertaining to the Marine Corps CCF. Of the utmost importance to this review, the Marine Corps is releasing a new Marine Corps Order (MCO) governing the CCF, which is currently undergoing final draft reviews. Thorough analysis of this draft document was utilized to further inform the analysis of other pertinent documents and regulations that govern the conduct of business in the CCF.

Research was also conducted through case study data analysis and by using a survey that included multiple choice responses and short answers that were aimed at answering the research objective taking into consideration a variety of stakeholder viewpoints. The survey's stakeholder audience consisted of a blend of field grade officers and senior enlisted Marines who are either currently serving in a CCF billet, or had previously served in the community. Qualitative analysis of case study data and survey responses, reconciled against literature review findings, served to strengthen the TIPS Model analysis yielding the resultant conclusions and recommendations for the future employment of officers in the CCF.

D. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided a brief overview of the CCF and the problems the Marine Corps is facing due to critical shortages of officers serving in the CCF despite contracting being a high demand, low density capability. The realignment efforts within the CCF were introduced, serving to highlight that problems appear to still exist within the CCF officer structure even after the realignment's completion. Moreover, a specific objective was clearly defined to focus the research efforts on identifying potential critical vulnerabilities within the CCF structure. The scope of the research was established to hone in on training, career path, and manpower deficiency focus areas of interest within the constraints of conducting a TIPS Model analysis. The methodology defined the qualitative research strategy utilizing case study data, survey responses, and literature review findings to yield conclusions and recommendations from this research effort.

The next chapter sets the background for research analysis by further defining critical aspects of the CCF. It provides foundational information surrounding the CCF to facilitate comprehension of data analysis. It discusses training considerations, historical CCF events, and manpower shortfalls.

II. BACKGROUND

This chapter provides background information instrumental to understanding the critical officer shortfalls discussed and analyzed within this research. It provides an overview of the structure and mission of the CCF and discusses past and current training considerations for CCF officers. It will also outline the CCF realignment actions that were implemented to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiencies in support of CCF operations. Finally, it discusses current officer shortfalls and the potential impacts they are having on the CCF.

A. STRUCTURE AND MISSION

The Contingency Contracting Officer 3006 military occupational specialty (MOS) is a low-density, high demand workforce specialty that resides in the Marine Corps CCF. The CCF is currently facing manpower deficiencies in its officer corps, potentially degrading support to operational forces and installation tenant commands. Aside from senior enlisted personnel, the senior leadership component of the CCF is comprised of its officers, and these officers are required to rotate in and out of CCF billets due to the requirement to maintain proficiency in their PMOS, and eligibility for future promotions.

The mission of the CCF is to support the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF), supporting establishment, Special Operations Forces, and Joint and Supported Coalition Forces by planning and obtaining supplies and services from non-organic sources through associated contract support integration, contracting support and contractor management functions (DON, in press).

B. EDUCATION

Regarding an officers involvement in enabling the CCF mission, the Marine Corps has attempted several different training methods throughout the years, ranging from resident and non-resident education provided at Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) and at the Marine Corps Combat Service Support Schools (MCCSSS) Camp Johnson, NC resident school house.

1. Officer Training, Pre-2007

During this era, Marine Corps officers were selected via the Special Education Program (SEP) to attend the resident NPS master degree program for Acquisition & Contract Management (curriculum 815) in order to obtain appropriate educational credits for Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) contracting certification (USMC, 2005). Upon graduation the officer completed a three year pay-back tour in the CCF before transitioning back to their PMOS. According to the NPS academic catalog,

The Acquisition and Contract Management curriculum is an interdisciplinary program which integrates management theory, accounting, economics, finance, behavioral science, management theory, operations/systems analysis, and specific courses in acquisition and contracting. The curriculum includes a concentration option in strategic purchasing. (Naval Postgraduate School, 2016, p. 57)

In August, 2006, *Marine Administrative Message* (MARADMIN) 373/06 was released announcing changes to the training of enlisted and officers serving in contracting, establishing a partnership with Defense Acquisition University (DAU) at the MCCSSS (USMC, 2006). Thereafter, *MARADMIN* 290/07 announced that the SEP selection for the 815 curriculum was eliminated (USMC, 2007).

2. Officer Training, 2007 to 2014

During this era, Marine Corps officers attended training at the MCCSSS in Camp Johnson, NC to complete a series of DAU online and resident courses. The training was provided over a three month period introducing the 3006 MOS to Marine Corps officers from the logistics, comptroller, and supply communities. The course began by having officers complete the basic entry-level course that all contracting professionals must attend, CON 090: Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Fundamentals. The DAU schoolhouse also provided many other Level I and Level II DAU training classes. The schoolhouse incorporated multiple practical exercises, adding value to the training, and demonstrating to students how each contracting functional area related with one another.

In 2013, MARADMIN 593/13 announced that the DAU schoolhouse had been discontinued and as an interim solution, until such time a resident program could be

established, officers would be competitively selected to attend the NPS distance learning program for contract management while concurrently conducting on-the-job training (OJT) at Regional Contracting Offices (RCO) (USMC, 2013).

3. Officer Training, 2014 to Present

Beginning in 2014, officers once again attended NPS to obtain required training for service in contracting. As an interim solution, officers were selected to attend distance learning as previously stated. This solution drew upon officers from logistics, comptroller, and supply communities to earn a Master of Science in Contract Management (curriculum 835), while concurrently obtaining contracting certification eligibility through DAU course equivalencies (USMC, 2013). According to the NPS academic catalog,

The Master of Science in Contract Management (MSCM) degree is designed to provide civilians in the Department of Defense (DOD) and other federal government agencies an advanced education in the concepts, methodologies and analytical techniques necessary for successful management of acquisition and contracting within complex organizations. The curriculum focuses on problem solving and decision making within the acquisition environment utilizing case studies, teaming exercises, hands-on applications, active participation, and other similar activities. Lecture and laboratory tasks require the application of critical thinking to problem solving within actual situations. Upon completion of this curriculum, graduates will be able to manage and lead effectively in systems buying offices, field contracting offices, contract administration offices, and contracting policy offices. (Naval Postgraduate School, 2016, p. 82)

In 2014, MARADMIN 357/14 announced that supply officers would be selected on the Commandant's Career-Level Education Board (CCLEB) to attend the resident version of the NPS contract management curriculum (USMC, 2014b). Officers completing the resident program owe a three year pay-back tour upon graduation in which they complete one year of OJT at the RCO and then complete two years of pay-back at an Expeditionary Contracting Platoon (ECP). Despite the method of training received, the Marine Corps CCF still faces officer manpower shortages that are a potential detriment to the CCF efficiently conducting its mission.

C. CCF REALIGNMENT ACTIONS

Traditionally, the Marine Corps mapped its uniformed contracting personnel to RCO to optimize the use of contracting Marines in support of garrison requirements and provide a stable training environment. Training included a combination of required DAU training classes coupled with experience gained while serving in an acquisitions coded billet for contracting professionals. While providing those advantages, mapping Marines to the RCOs removed the contingency contracting capability from the operational forces since the structure existed predominately to provide base operating support contracts onboard Marine Corps installations. Placing the contracting Marines in billets coded for the operational forces serves to protect the uniformed community from manpower cuts in the midst of congressionally mandated force structure drawdowns under the premise that Marines serving in operational contracting support functions are more critical to the Marine Corps. These Marines are less susceptible to manpower cuts as opposed to Marines serving alongside civilian personnel in a base operating support capacity.

On 1 October 2014, the CCF realignment construct reintegrated Marine Corps uniform contracting personnel into the operating force (OPFOR). This action sought to establish a direct relationship to support warfighting functions as opposed to the garrison installation support model previously in use. The CCF realignment implemented an enterprise-wide change within the Marine Corps that affected all Marine Corps commands that are reliant upon contracting personnel in both the OPFOR and SE. Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) issued the order to restructure the CCF that includes the following excerpt:

The Marine Corps' Contingency Contracting Force (CCF) is comprised of 154 Marines: 121 enlisted and 33 officers. Ref A thru D have realigned and reorganized the CCF and established new training procedures to develop and sustain a capable and qualified contingency contracting workforce that is balanced and optimized for employment within the operational forces and Supporting Establishment (SE). As part of the 182k restructuring efforts, CCF Marines unmapped to MLG headquarters (HQ) were moved to service company (SVCCO), headquarters regiment (HQTRS RGMT), MLG to align with the other LCE service functions effective 1 Oct 2014. The CCF realignment established an OCS capability that provides contract support planning and integration and contractor

management functions at the MARFOR and MEF, and a contracting support execution function at the MLG. OCS capability in the Marine Corps will synchronize, integrate and provide contract support to MAGTF and Marine Corps operational missions. (DON, in press)

Contracting is not an initial entry-level MOS. Enlisted Marines must be an E-5 to enter the CCF and officers enter through a competitive selection board on the CCLEB. Officers screened for the CCLEB are typically in the grade of O-2 through O-3 that have completed a successful tour in their PMOS and have served at least three years as an officer prior to their screening on the CCLEB. This selection process and training method is in response to officer manpower deficiencies historically faced by the CCF.

D. CCF OFFICER DEFICIENCIES

To correct critical deficiencies in manpower, the CCF realignment implemented an interim solution to fill the gap created by not having an adequate commissioned officer presence within the CCF. This interim solution placed officers as additional manpower inside of RCOs while they completed their NPS requirements. Parallel to the interim solution, the Marine Corps also implemented a long-term solution which screens applicants to attend the 18 month resident contracting master degree program at NPS, and subsequently be assigned to an installation RCO upon graduation. The current training structure for officers has increased the entry-level officer corps for contracting, but considering the 18–24 month training intervals the benefits derived from this interim and long-term set of solutions are unlikely to be realized for several years. In fact, current gaps in officer billets for senior grades have created greater capability deficiencies in CCF manpower readiness through the loss of their experience despite the Marine Corps attempting to close deficiency gaps by increasing the number of qualified officers who are entering the CCF but lack contracting experience.

While this interim solution focused on training, the CCF realignment as a whole potentially did not address a critical vulnerability resident in the CCF by making the Contingency Contracting Officer a PMOS for Marine officers, as opposed to an additional MOS (AMOS). The AMOS assignment as opposed to PMOS causes the officer to remain transient in the field as they must return to their PMOS to remain

competitive for promotion. Furthermore, the CCF realignment's long-term solution is to send officers resident to NPS while restricting the eligible specialties that can become a 3006 to only supply officers as a necessary MOS (NMOS). This action has created additional vulnerabilities in the breadth, continuity, and retention of qualified officer talent, leadership, and experience within the CCF which potentially degrades the CCF's ability to efficiently complete its mission.

E. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided background surrounding significant manpower shortfalls in CCF officers. These shortfalls result from a highly specialized and lengthy training curriculum coupled with an impermanent MOS structure. Impermanence causes officers to rotate out of contracting billets after single tours leaving a very narrow community from which the Marine Corps can draw upon to fill CCF officer billets, often leaving senior contracting billets vacant or filled by officers not possessing the requisite experience. The Marine Corps has attempted multiple training methods to increase the throughput of its CCF officer corps, including 18–24 month resident and non-resident graduate degree programs, as well as a three month schoolhouse combined with OJT instruction at installation contracting activities.

The current realignment actions for the CCF workforce are a result of protecting the MOS from potential manpower cuts during a period of congressionally mandated force drawdowns. This effort sought to establish a direct relationship between uniformed contracting personnel providing support to Marine OPFORs as opposed to base operating support functions commonly viewed as being more prone to manpower cuts. Officers entering the CCF are selected on the CCLEB following a successful tour in their PMOS. These Marines have typically served as an officer at least three years and are of the grade O-2 through O-3. Once selected on the CCLEB these officers report to NPS for an 18 month resident graduate program in contract management for follow on assignment to an installation contracting activity for OJT instruction.

The highly specialized career field combined with the lengthy training curriculum and impermanent officer assignment has created significant officer manpower shortfalls

in the CCF. The Marine Corps has attempted to address these manpower shortfalls by increasing the throughput of officers into contracting through incentivizing officers with a master degree. The long-term benefit of the increased officer presence is not likely to be realized by the Marine Corps for several years, since the additional officers entering the CCF must return to their PMOS following the completion of their entry-level tour. The Marine Corps has attempted to address the continuity of its officer corps in the CCF by confining the MOS exclusively to supply officers as a NMOS, but the benefits of this action will also take several years to develop. Also, the consequences from limiting entry into the CCF officer corps to supply officers only will potentially create additional weaknesses in the breadth, talent, and leadership abilities of the CCF officer corps. These aspects of CCF officer deficiencies are further analyzed under the TIPS Model in Chapter V.

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III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A comprehensive review of literature pertinent to the CCF was critical to understanding the implications of the CCF realignment on the CCF officer corps. Additionally, the review fostered a greater understanding of the contents that are being written into the new MCO that is currently undergoing final revisions before being signed into effect. The literature review began with a thorough analysis of directives, doctrine, and studies pertaining to the field of contracting and to potential contingency contracting officer feeder MOSs such as supply, comptrollers, and logistics. Upon cementing a foundational understanding of these documents, the literature review focused on analyzing messages that effectively implemented the CCF realignment actions, published via MARADMINs. Lastly, utilizing accrued knowledge from previously reviewed literature, the draft MCO contents were thoroughly analyzed and assessed for implications that pertain to officers entering into and currently serving in the CCF.

Upon commencing the literature review, documents were classified into three main categories: Directives, Doctrine, and Studies; Implementation Messages; and Draft MCO. This chapter provides an overview of significant sources within the three classifications. Sources are linked to officers serving in the CCF, driving the analysis and conclusions of this project.

A. DIRECTIVES, DOCTRINE, AND STUDIES

1. *Contingency Contracting* (Marine Corps Reference Publication 4-11E)

This document is a Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) that articulates doctrinal practices within contingency contracting on a level that is understood by all entities interacting with and supported by CCF personnel. MCRP 4-11E, *Contingency Contracting*, details the importance of the two types of authority that affect Marines serving in the CCF: command authority and contracting authority. CCF officer oversight and interface with key leadership is critical for ensuring these two authorities are not crossed during contracting operations, particularly when the assigned contracting officer (KO) is an enlisted Marine serving under officers of the supported command. This

document establishes functional and command and control relationships as it pertains to contracting. Additionally, this document emphasized the importance of the role of officers serving as OCS advisors and the role they play as staff planners in service to the supported commander. This document is important because it informs the research knowledge base by detailing the workings of critical interrelationships that must exist in order for the CCF to provide effective and efficient contracting support to the Marine Corps (2009).

2. *Military Contractors: How Earlier Integration in the Planning Process Would Achieve Greater Mission Success*

This document is a Naval War College research report that emphasizes the importance of military contractor inclusion during requirements planning for achieving successful mission accomplishment in supported operations. The Naval War College research report fostered an understanding of the importance of retaining experienced, well-qualified officers in the CCF. It provided a link to officers serving in an OCS capacity and their important role in the administration of the Adaptive Planning and Execution System (APEX) platform in the model of the Joint Operational Planning Process, which ultimately informs the operational order Annex W, OCS. Additionally, this report fostered creativity in the recommendations presented in this research, such as top secret security clearances as incentives to retain well-qualified senior officers. This document is important because it informs the research knowledge base by demonstrating the need for thorough integrated planning in contracting for mission requirements, accenting the CCF's need to incentivize officers to serve in CCF billets to facilitate this complex form of planning, particularly at the operational and strategic levels of war.

3. *Supply Administration and Operations Training and Readiness Manual (NAVMC 3500.64B)*

This document is the Training and Readiness (T&R) manual that establishes Marine Corps required training standards for Marines serving in the Supply and Contracting occupational fields in order to accomplish Marine Corps Mission Essential Tasks (MET). Chapter 6 of the T&R provides the link between T&R events and

standards expected of an officer serving in the 3006 MOS, and the Individual Development Plan (IDP) and Contracting Competency Model (CCM) included as appendices to the draft MCO. Officers are expected to train to these standards. Moreover, officers are expected to sustain these standards, which has the potential to become a critical deficiency as the officer transitions between contracting and their PMOS. It is important to note, this document does not delineate the additional requirements for CCF personnel to obtain and sustain DAWIA KO certifications. These training requirements are in addition to T&R training standards, and required in order to obtain a contracting warrant; however, commonalities do exist. Serving in a field governed by ever-changing FAR regulations, system variations between Continental United States (CONUS) and Outside Continental United States (OCONUS) contracting venues, and changes and updates to system interfaces requires the officer to continuously adapt and learn while serving in the CCF. Ongoing changes that occur during the period the officer is not serving in the CCF appears to be linked to problems associated with meeting T&R standards. Ultimately, this document is important because it informs the research knowledge base by clearly defining the training the Marine Corps expects CCF officers to successfully complete and sustain in order for the Marine Corps to accomplish METs (DON, 2014a).

4. *Contracting Positions: Qualification Requirements (10 U.S. Code § 1724)*

The qualification requirements necessary to serve in the CCF are codified in 10 U.S. Code § 1724. The standards set forth in this law govern how an officer must be trained to enter into and serve in the field of contracting. These qualification requirements inform necessary accession pipeline considerations that the Marine Corps must adhere to when populating its CCF officer corps. The requirements also play into the incentives that officers could receive to enter into and remain serving in contracting, as Marine officers are not required to have business related degrees to commission as officers in the Marine Corps, but 10 U.S. Code § 1724 requires they possess 24 business-related credits to serve in the CCF. This document is important because it informs the research knowledge base by clearly establishing who is eligible to serve in the CCF, further

establishing necessary accession pipeline lead-time considerations for training an entry-level officer to officially enter into the CCF (10 U.S. § Code 1724, 2011).

5. *Operational Contract Support (Joint Publication 4-10)*

This Joint Publication (JP) introduces the joint commander to OCS, defining roles and responsibilities for OCS. Furthermore, JP 4-10 provides the joint doctrine for actual employment of OCS support in operations to effectively and efficiently meet requirements dictated by the mission. This document provides a link to the Marine Corps' ability to provide well-qualified CCF officers as OCS advisors in support of the crucial functions of the Operational Contract Support Integration Cell, as well as the Operational Contracting Oversight Cell (OCOC) established in the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) G-4 during large-scale operations in support of the Ground Combatant Commander (GCC). At this echelon of operations and complexities, CCF officers with increased levels of contracting experience are needed to clearly articulate contracting requirements that may have far-reaching impacts within the GCC's area of responsibility (AOR). This document is important because it informs the research knowledge base by demonstrating the shear importance of the Marine Corps maintaining an experienced, well-qualified CCF officer corps to reinforce its support provided in joint, large-scale operational environments governed by GCCs, ultimately increasing the relevance of the Marine Corps and its contracting capability in support of expeditionary operations (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2014).

6. *Military Occupational Specialties Manual (NAVMC 1200.1A W/CH1)*

This document is also known as the "MOS Manual," and it provides a capability description pertaining to the 3006 MOS and explains working relationships with other MOS fields in the Marine Corps. The MOS Manual also provides insights to appropriate accession pipeline considerations for the CCF, such as appropriate feeder MOSs into the field of contracting. It explains the interrelationships that exist between the contracting, comptroller, and supply communities, and provides the overall description of what an officer possessing the 3006 MOS is supposed to be able to do for the Marine Corps. This document is important because it informs the research knowledge base of HQMC

expectations of its CCF officer corps, and it demonstrates how supply officers, comptrollers, and even logistics officers may be the best suited communities from which to competitively select officers to serve in the CCF due to their intimate working relationships with the contracting community (DON, 2015a).

7. *Consumer-Level Supply Policy (Marine Corps Order 4400.150)*

This document is the MCO that governs supply operations within the Marine Corps, defining functional area responsibilities and stressing the requirement for asset accountability and legal funds expenditure. MCO 4400.150 provides the clear link between supply officers and contracting, and further suggests supply officers as an appropriate feeder MOS into contracting. As one example, supply officers typically serve as Approving Officials (AO) for a Commanding Officer's Government-wide Commercial Purchase Card (GCPC) program, where they are required to appropriately vet mandatory sources of supplies and services before establishing contracts under the micro-purchase threshold. This level of knowledge and intimacy with contracting, in addition to building and submitting required purchase request (PR) documentation to contracting for unit requirements, presumably make the supply officer the ideal candidate to become a 3006. This document is important because it informs the research knowledge base of a supply officer's duty requirements that are associated with contracting, informing recommendations and conclusions pertaining to appropriate feeder MOS considerations (DON, 2014c).

8. *Contingency Contracting: A Framework for Reform-2015 Update (DoDIG-2015-101)*

This document is part of a series of update reports regarding contingency contracting reform initiatives and summarizes multiple contingency contracting investigations. In 2010 the DOD IGO conducted an inspection of reports regarding contracts in a contingency environment. The findings of the investigation were significant enough that they made the summary report a reoccurring deliverable every two years. This report is the third such report and captures some data from the previous two. The report highlights negative trends in contingency contracting, suggests causes for the

findings, and assesses unit actions in implementing the recommendations provided in the original report. This document is important because it informs the research knowledge base about systemic problem areas present throughout DOD contingency contracting activities that potentially identify CCF critical vulnerabilities (2015).

B. IMPLEMENTATION MESSAGES

1. *Contingency Contracting Officer (AMOS 3006) Sourcing and Education (MARADMIN 283/14)*

MARADMIN 283/14 announced the new 3006 sourcing initiative, making 3006 a NMOS for supply officers. Furthermore, it announced the cancellation of the DAU schoolhouse located at Camp Johnson, NC and that the Marine Corps would be once again sending its officers through contracting training at the NPS. This MARADMIN also established an interim solution for officers to attend NPS in a distance learning status while simultaneously conducting OJT at a RCO. This document is important because it informs the research knowledge base by demonstrating that the Marine Corps is concerned about the quality and level of education its CCF officer corps receives upon entry into contracting. Furthermore, it clearly establishes supply officers as a feeder MOS into contracting by denoting 3006 as a NMOS, which adds additional credibility to a supply officer's Official Military Personnel File when looked at for future promotion considerations (USMC, 2014).

2. *FY15 Contingency Contracting Officer (AMOS 3006) Solicitation (MARADMIN 043/15)*

MARADMIN 043/15 was a solicitation for officer applicants to apply into the contracting field. It gave preference to supply officers; however, comptrollers, logistics officers, and aviation supply officers were given an opportunity to apply in the instance seats remained available after all supply officer packages had been evaluated. The availability made to MOSs other than supply officers suggests that the Marine Corps may be willing to consider other appropriate feeder MOSs into contracting, potentially feeding recommendations made as a result of this project. This document is important because it informs the research knowledge base of other potential feeder MOSs for entry into the

CCF officer corps, and it denotes that officer applicants should be competitively selected via an accession board to ensure the quality of the CCF officer corps (USMC, 2015a).

3. *Establishing Operational Contract Support Capability in Support of MAGTF Operations (MARADMIN 122/15)*

MARADMIN 122/15 established that 3006 selection would happen on the CCLEB. Selection on the CCLEB is limited to Supply Officers only, which may serve to inform recommendations this research makes about appropriate feeder MOSs. Additionally, the MARADMIN acknowledged that CCF billets would be gapped for the foreseeable future as the Marine Corps continues to make the change in officer selection and assignment to the CCF, and that existing 3006s may be drawn upon to support the CCF during the transition. The MARADMIN also emphasized command and control of officers serving as warranted KOs via the ECPs established in the Marine Logistics Groups (MLG), reiterating the impacts of the CCF realignment. Finally, the MARADMIN also specified OCS as a function of logistics and that the capability resides in the G-4 coded staff sections of Marine Corps Forces (MARFORs) and MEFs. This document is important because it informs the research knowledge base of accession pipeline protocols. Additionally, it notes that critical shortfalls exist and may persist for the foreseeable future which draws attention to further analysis into potential root causes for such critical shortfalls. Lastly, this document delineates particular command and control relationships for the employment of CCF officers serving in billets as warranted KOs and as OCS advisors (USMC, 2015a).

4. *U.S. Marine Corps Contractual Services Guidance for Fiscal Year 2016 (MARADMIN 441/15)*

MARADMIN 441/15 required commanders to establish Service Requirements Review Boards (SRRB) for review and approval of PRs for services, with validation authority established no lower than first General Officer or Senior Executive Service level. The necessity of this review is linked to the complexity involved in defining, awarding, and managing service requirements contracts. This research could attempt to link this increased complexity to the need for well-qualified officers to manage the SRRB

process and lend their expertise to garrison and expeditionary contracting activities. This document is important because it informs the research knowledge base of the requirement to conduct SRRBs, which implies the need for experienced and well-qualified senior leaders, particularly CCF officers, to manage the conduct of these boards. Being that the nature of service contracts tends to be more complex than that of supply contracts, there may also be a link to appropriate training and manpower staffing considerations to ensure SRRBs are appropriately staffed (USMC, 2015b).

C. DRAFT MCO

The Marine Corps is still in the process of editing the final draft of a new MCO governing the CCF. During the literature review, a copy of the draft MCO was obtained and thoroughly reviewed. The draft MCO was the primary focus of this research literature review, as it will ultimately become the principle enforcement mechanism for appropriate CCF employment when it is signed into effect. The order discusses all facets that will govern the CCF (e.g., annual capability assessments, CCF billet rotations back to PMOS, and fitness report (FITREP) performance evaluation procedures for Marines serving in the CCF). This document is important because it informs the research knowledge base of the Marine Corps' intent for employment of its CCF throughout all Marine Corps organizational hierarchies. Additionally, it discusses information pertinent to informing the focus areas of interest for this research: training, career path, and manpower deficiencies. The draft MCO will provide the basis of comparison for analysis, recommendations, and conclusions within this research, serving as the overarching document of reference throughout the conduct of research efforts (DON, in press).

D. CHAPTER SUMMARY

A comprehensive review of literature pertinent to the CCF was critical to assessing and understanding impacts of the CCF realignment relevant to the CCF officer corps. This chapter provided an overview of significant sources of information within three established documentation classifications that influenced the research herein. The literature reviewed is foundational for the TIPS Model analysis of the CCF and served to

form the questions posed in the research survey in order to obtain stakeholder viewpoints of potential problems plaguing the CCF officer corps.

The directives, doctrine, and studies provided insight into how the Marine Corps attempts to staff and employ its CCF to efficiently conduct its mission. Critical manpower shortfalls and studies suggest inefficiencies may exist. The implementation messages discussed the actions the Marine Corps took during the CCF realignment in an attempt to improve efficiencies. Lastly, the Marine Corps is in the process of editing a draft MCO that will ultimately serve as the enforcement mechanism for CCF employment. Due to the imminent effectiveness of this order, this research uses the draft MCO as the overarching document of reference throughout the conduct of the research.

Next, data from the studies discussed in the literature review, and the research survey responses are presented to inform later discussion and analysis related to the objective of this project.

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IV. DATA

This chapter presents raw data collected from the DOD IGO report discussed in the literature review, manpower data from HQMC Installations and Logistics (I&L) Logistics Policy and Capabilities Branch (LPC), and tabulated survey responses from a survey solicited in support of this research effort. The chapter will also include a description of the survey design, focus areas, and process. The survey solicited input from senior enlisted Marines and field grade Marine officers that are serving in, or have previously served in, the Marine Corps contracting community. The survey questions were designed around the research objective of this paper to determine contracting community perceptions of the selection, training, employment, and retention of CCF officers, as well as potential critical vulnerabilities of the CCF. All of the data presented in Chapter IV will be discussed and analyzed in Chapter V.

A. TOP FIVE SYSTEMIC CONTRACTING PROBLEM AREAS

In 2015, the DOD IGO released DOD IGO Report DODIG-2015-101. Table 1 contains statistical information from this DOD IGO report. Table 1 also contains data obtained from two past DOD IGO summary reports (D-2010-059 and DODIG-2012-134). Collectively, the three summary reports depicted in the table analyzed contingency contracting problems that the DOD IGO investigated over a seven-year span of time, as the 2010 report data stemmed from as far back as 2007. DODIG-2015-101 stated: “DOD IG[O] consistently identified a total of nine systemic problems in all three summary reports” (2015, p. 4). The nine identified problem areas are oversight and surveillance; requirements; property accountability; financial management; contract pricing; source selection; contract documentation; contract type; and contractor personnel. Table 1 depicts the top five problems identified, ranking them in order of severity, and identifies the number of reports contained in each problem area. The number of reports are further divided into the number of occurrences identified per summary report. Though not specific to the Marine Corps, this data depicts negative trends throughout DOD contingency contracting. The data will facilitate the assessment and relationship of DOD

IGO findings as compared to current critical vulnerabilities specific to the Marine Corps CCF.

Table 1. Top Five Systemic Contracting Problem Areas.
Source: DOD (2015)

Rank of Systemic Contracting Problem Area	Systemic Contracting Problem Area	Number of Reports Discussed in Report No. D-2010-059	Number of Reports Discussed in Report No. DODIG-2012-134	Number of Reports Discussed in Report No. DODIG-2015-101	Total Reports
1	Oversight and Surveillance	24	24	27	75
2	Property Accountability	17	8	9	34
3	Requirements	12	9	12	33
4	Financial Management	10	14	7	31
5	Contract Documentation	19	5	5	29

B. APRIL 2016 3006 MOS BILLETS AND VACANCIES

HQMC I&L, LPC serves as the occupational field sponsor for 3006 Marines. As such, they are responsible for tracking and filling 3006 billets. Table 2 includes the 3006 billets and vacancies as they were at the start of April 2016. Analysis of this data should provide additional insight into critical vulnerabilities that may exist within manpower considerations. It should also reveal how the Marine Corps is currently spreading the loading its CCF officer corps to accomplish its mission. Names have been redacted from the source document to remove personally identifiable information, and vacant billets have been highlighted for ease of identification.

Table 2. April 2016 3006 MOS Billets and Vacancies.
Adapted from Navarro (2016).

Billets	Rank	Current Fill (2016)
HQMC	LtCol	LtCol (redacted)
HQMC	Maj	Vacant
MARFORPAC	Maj	Maj (redacted)
MARCENT	Maj	Maj (redacted)
MARSOC	LtCol	LtCol (redacted)
MARFORAF/EUR	Maj	Maj (redacted)
MARFORSOUTH	Maj	Vacant
MARFORRES (NOLA)	Capt	Capt (redacted)
I MEF	Maj	LtCol (redacted)
II MEF	Maj	Vacant
III MEF	Maj	Capt (redacted)
1st MLG CCO	LtCol	Capt (redacted)
1st MLG	Capt	Capt (redacted)
1st MLG	Capt	Capt (redacted)
1st MLG	Capt	Capt (redacted)
2nd MLG CCO	Maj	Vacant
2nd MLG	Capt	Capt (redacted)
2nd MLG	Capt	Capt (redacted)
2nd MLG	Capt	Capt (redacted)
3rd MLG CCO	LtCol	Maj (redacted)
3rd MLG	Capt	Vacant
3rd MLG	Capt	Vacant
DPRI/MARFORPAC	Capt	Vacant
MCI West Director RCO	LtCol	LtCol (redacted)
MCI EAST Director RCO	LtCol	LtCol (redacted)
MCB QUANTICO Director RCO	Col	LtCol (redacted)
MCB QUANTICO	Capt	Capt (redacted)
MCIPAC Director RCO	Maj	LtCol (redacted)
MCIPAC Camp Butler	Capt	Vacant
MCB HAWAII DIRECTOR RCO	Maj	LtCol (redacted)
LOGCOM	Capt	Capt (redacted)
PISC	Capt	Capt (redacted)
29 Palms	Capt	Vacant

Note: Vacant billets are highlighted.

C. SURVEY

1. Survey Design and Focus Areas

The survey was constructed and aimed at answering the research objective through identification of CCF officer corps employment considerations from the viewpoints of relevant stakeholders. The survey's stakeholder audience consisted of field grade officers (Major and Lieutenant Colonel) and senior enlisted Marines (Master Sergeant and Master Gunnery Sergeant) who were either currently serving in a CCF billet, or had previously served in the contracting community. The survey contained seven multiple choice questions including one question to identify if the respondent was serving (served as) as an officer or enlisted. All questions, with the exception of number one, included an optional comment box for the respondent to provide additional remarks.

2. Survey Process

The survey was disseminated through the NPS LimeSurvey tool. All participants were screened based upon the eligibility criteria of grade and contracting MOS assignment. Personnel meeting the eligibility criteria received an email requesting participation in the survey from the token management tool in LimeSurvey. Surveys were made available for 15 days from receipt of the invitation, and participants received a reminder email seven days prior to the survey expiration. Survey participation was voluntary, anonymous, and estimated to take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

3. Survey Results

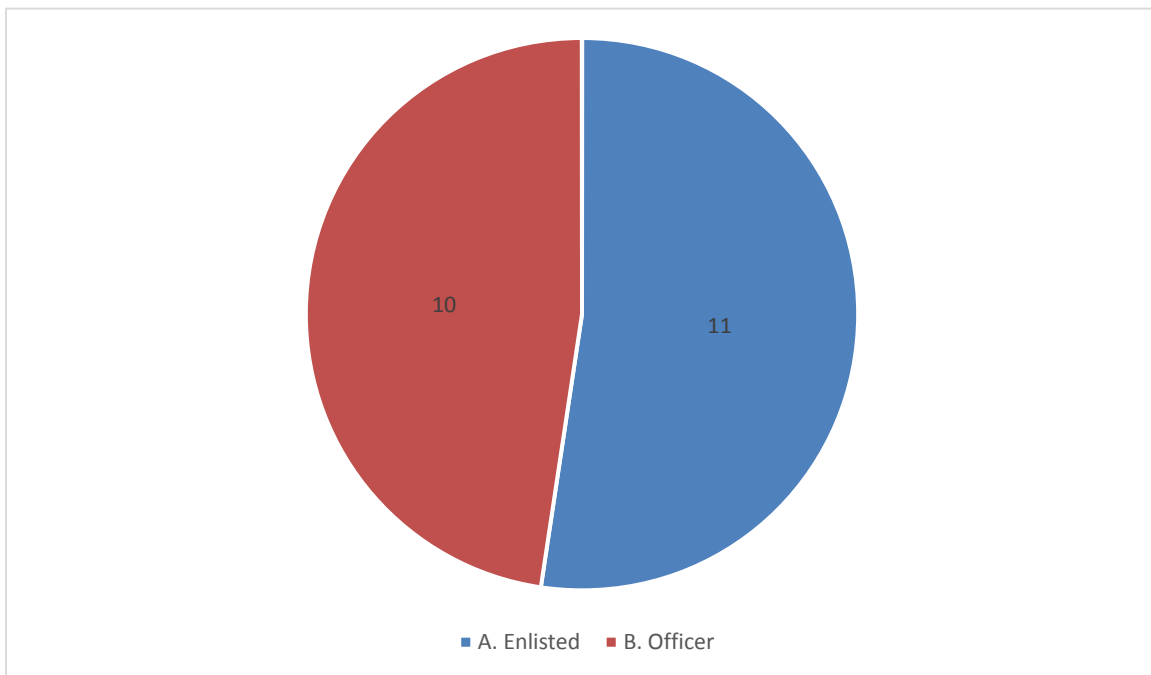
The survey was provided to a total of 37 personnel. This survey population is extremely small due to the small population of senior officer and enlisted Marines in the CCF, with only 37 personnel currently available to solicit input from. From the 37 personnel solicited, 21 provided a response yielding a 58 percent response rate. Results from each survey question are provided in the following sub-sections.

Question 1: I am serving as or previously served as: [officer or enlisted]

Of the 21 survey participants, 11 were enlisted service members and the remaining 10 were officers, as visually depicted in Figure 1. All participants were serving

on active duty in the Marine Corps at the time of the survey. The survey did not query the specific rank of each participant, but the survey was designed so that all enlisted participants were E-8 select or above who carry the 3044 MOS of Contingency Contract Specialist. Officer participants were at the rank of O-4 select or above that had completed at least one assignment as a 3006 Contingency Contracting Officer. Officer participants were a mix of personnel that currently serve in a 3006 billet assignment or a billet in their PMOSs.

Figure 1. Question 1 Survey Response Chart



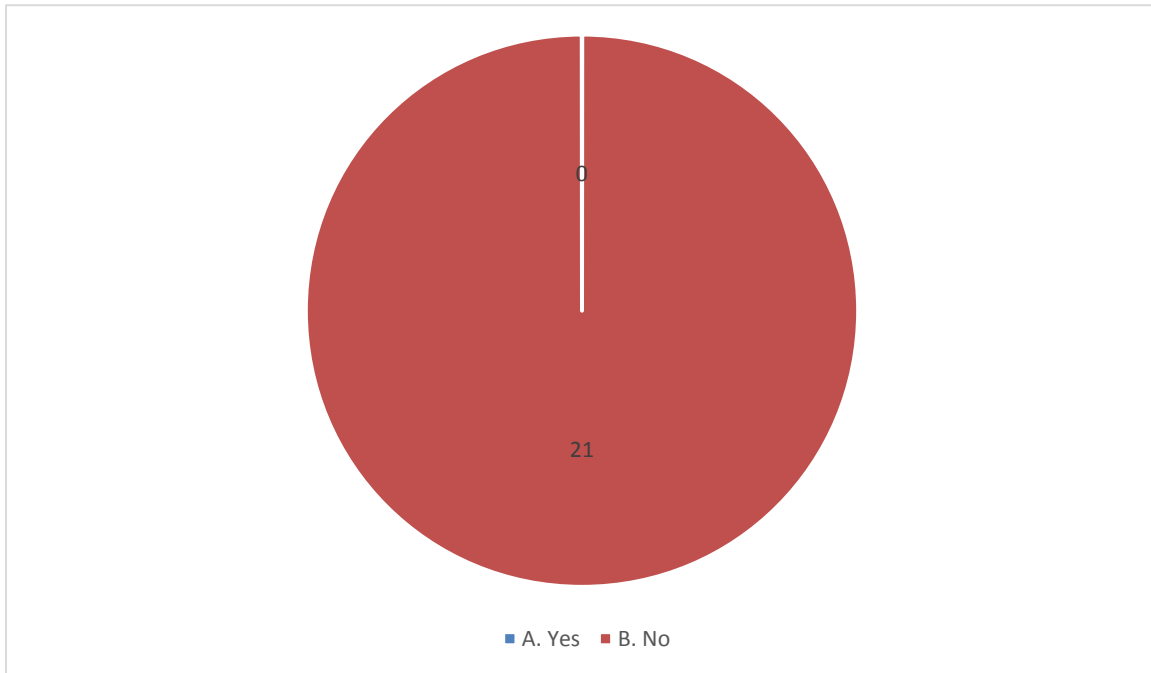
The purpose of this question is merely to break down the respondent population to identify any anomalies that are particular to officers or enlisted personnel.

Question 2: Does your command have a reintegration period for commissioned officers returning to the contracting MOS for a subsequent tour before they are able to deploy? If yes, what training is required?

All survey participants unanimously selected no in response to question two, as visually depicted in Figure 2. Three survey respondents also provided additional comments. These comments were in reference to the lack of formalized reintegration

training for officers returning to contracting for subsequent tours, and they remarked that such a training program should be developed due to the highly technical and frequently changing regulations that govern contracting operations.

Figure 2. Question 2 Survey Response Chart



This question was designed to help identify whether or not CCF units are currently implementing reintegration training in order to refresh returning 3006 capabilities lost through skill atrophy, as well as to familiarize these officers with up-to-date federal and local regulations, policy, and directives.

In the following sub-section, questions 3, 4, and 5 are presented collectively as these questions essentially queried the same information, but specifically as it pertains to the ranks of Captain, Major, and Lieutenant Colonel.

Questions 3, 4, & 5: Upon completion of OJT [for Captains], what role could commissioned officers [3: Captain, 4: Major, 5: Lieutenant Colonel] have in the contracting community throughout their career progression? Please select all that apply.

Questions three, four, and five presented the same question to participants with identical multiple choice options, and the variation in officer rank served as the only independent variable. Results are summarized in Table 3 with the highest percent “yes” and “no” responses highlighted in yellow and red, respectively, as they pertain to each rank.

Table 3. Questions 3–5 Survey Response

Role	Response	Capt		Maj		LtCol	
		Qty	%	Qty	%	Qty	%
a. OCS advisor	No	11	52%	2	10%	1	5%
	Yes	10	48%	19	90%	20	95%
b. Writing contracts	No	2	10%	7	33%	13	62%
	Yes	19	90%	14	67%	8	38%
c. Awarding contracts (warrant)	No	4	19%	1	5%	6	29%
	Yes	17	81%	20	95%	15	71%
d. Contracting activity OIC	No	11	52%	2	10%	0	0%
	Yes	10	48%	19	90%	21	100%
e. Acquisitions Command Billet	No	20	95%	16	76%	7	33%
	Yes	1	5%	5	24%	14	67%
f. Other/Comments	Yes	2 responses		2 responses		3 responses	
	Reference Chapter V to view responses						
Table Legend		Highest Percent Yes			Highest Percent No		

Data from this question will be analyzed to identify potential roles best-suited for CCF officers (applicable to each rank), serving to further inform recommendations and conclusions derived from the research.

Question 6: Which of the following are documented as critical vulnerabilities that affect the mission readiness for contracting? Please select all that apply.

Question 6 sought to identify areas of the most risk/weakness, also referred to as critical vulnerabilities, influencing the Marine Corps CCF's ability to efficiently execute its mission. Survey participants were provided 10 multiple-choice options to select from, as well as an option to identify other critical vulnerabilities not provided. Survey responses to this question are depicted in Table 4, with the highest percent yes and no responses highlighted in yellow and red, respectively.

Table 4. Question 6 Survey Response

Critical Vulnerability	Response	Qty	%
a. Impermanent officer assignment	No	5	24%
	Yes	16	76%
b. Officer manpower shortfalls	No	0	0%
	Yes	21	100%
c. Enlisted manpower shortfalls	No	10	48%
	Yes	11	52%
d. GS manpower shortfalls	No	15	71%
	Yes	6	29%
e. Officer’s technical proficiency	No	4	19%
	Yes	17	81%
f. Failure of contract administration/oversight	No	11	52%
	Yes	10	48%
g. Lack of customer understanding of the contracting processes	No	5	24%
	Yes	16	76%
h. Systems synchronization for OCONUS to CONUS contracts	No	14	67%
	Yes	7	33%
i. Knowledge of systems usage	No	12	57%
	Yes	9	43%
j. Lost knowledge from retiring contracting personnel	No	10	48%
	Yes	11	52%
k. Other/Comments	Yes	5 responses	
	Reference Chapter V to view responses		
Table Legend	Highest Percent Yes	Highest Percent No	

This question extracts the perceived critical vulnerabilities within the CCF from the perspective of the Marines who have or are currently serving in CCF billets. The data from this question will be analyzed to assess any inconsistencies between perceived vulnerabilities and substantiated vulnerabilities found through this research.

Question 7: What incentives (if any) could be offered to support retention of commissioned officers in the contracting community? Please select all that apply.

Question 7 sought to identify appropriate methods to retain and incentivize experienced, well-qualified commissioned officers for subsequent tours of service in the CCF. Survey participants were provided multiple choice options to select from, as well as an option to identify other retention incentives not provided in the question. Survey responses to this question are depicted in Table 5 with the highest percent yes and no responses highlighted in yellow and red, respectively.

Table 5. Question 7 Survey Response

Retention Incentive	Response	Qty	%
a. DOD funded graduate degree programs	No	6	29%
	Yes	15	71%
b. PME equivalencies for AMOS assignment	No	16	76%
	Yes	5	24%
c. Command billet opportunities aligned with the acquisitions MOS (8061)	No	8	38%
	Yes	13	62%
d. Special duty pay to incentivize retention	No	15	71%
	Yes	6	29%
e. None	No	20	95%
	Yes	1	5%
f. Other/Comments	Yes	5 responses	
	Reference Chapter V to view responses		
Table Legend	Highest Percent Yes		Highest Percent No

The data from this question will be analyzed to assess and develop recommendations that may potentially incentivize officers to desire subsequent tours in the CCF opposed to pursuing non-contracting related billets, or separating from service in the Marine Corps.

D. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented raw data collected from DOD IGO studies; manpower data from HQMC I&L, LPC; and data captured via the research survey solicited to appropriate members serving in, or having previously served in the CCF. The chapter also provided a description of the survey design, focus areas, and process. Data was presented in figures and tables to aid the reader's understanding of the information obtained. The data presented will be used to conduct deeper discussion and analysis in Chapter V, better informing resultant recommendations and conclusions pertaining to the research objective.

Next, data presented in Chapter IV will be thoroughly analyzed and discussed, defining its implications as it pertains to the CCF officer corps. Following this analysis and discussion, insights obtained will feed the follow-on use of the TIPS Model, which will be utilized to conduct deeper analysis within the constraints of the Personnel, Protocol, and Platform pillars of the CCF officer corps.

V. DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSIS

Chapter V begins discussion and analysis at the macro level by looking into systemic contingency contracting problems that the DOD is facing, and relating their relevance to CCF critical vulnerabilities. The chapter then transitions towards a micro-level approach, examining data from the current CCF officer corps billet structure and assignments. Next, the perception that senior CCF leadership has regarding 3006s is analyzed from the results obtained from survey respondents. Findings from these three research areas are then applied to analysis conducted utilizing the TIPS Model, assessing the overall health of the CCF officer corps within the personnel, protocol, and platform pillars.

A. TOP FIVE SYSTEMIC CONTRACTING PROBLEM AREAS DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

To establish a methodical approach to analyzing the systemic problems presented in Table 1, this sub-section will first look at which of the systemic problems within DOD-wide contingency contracting are also commonly found in within the CCF. Those problem areas shared by the CCF are further analyzed utilizing Table 1 to see whether the DOD experienced an improvement or regression in performance under each problem area between reporting periods. When reviewing the number of reports identified under each problem area, and analyzing how they change between the three distinct summary reports depicted in Table 1, the data can be utilized to assess trends and recommendation effectiveness within the overall DOD contingency contracting field. A decline in findings between summary reports suggests DOD IGO recommendations at the time were both appropriate and effective. A consistent or increasing number of findings between summary reports suggests DOD IGO recommendations at the time were not adhered to or ineffective. Areas with potentially sound recommendations may warrant further investigation into their effectiveness, assessing whether or not the Marine Corps should incorporate them into CCF operations.

The top five systemic problems listed in Table 1 are Oversight and Surveillance, Property Accountability, Requirements, Financial Management, and Contract Documentation. Of the top five systemic contracting problem areas, four can be directly linked to manpower shortfalls and training deficiencies present in the CCF. The one problem area not directly linked to manpower shortfalls and training deficiencies is Financial Management, which focused on violations of the Antideficiency Act, Bona Fide Needs Rule, and Misappropriation Act. While a lack of training and education can attribute to a portion of this problem area, Financial Management is not recognized as a negative trend within the CCF, and is not analyzed further in this study. In the following sub-sections each of the remaining four systemic problem areas are discussed and analyzed.

- Oversight and Surveillance

Oversight and Surveillance is ranked as the most egregious problem area with 75 total reports identified. There are over 40 more reports with discrepancies in Oversight and Surveillance than there are reports in the second largest problem area. The 2015 summary report classifies Oversight and Surveillance problems into six categories. Four of the six categories are directly relevant to the CCF, which include training and certification, contracting officer, contracting officer representative (COR), and insufficient staff (2015). Of these four categories, training and certification is the most prevalent. It is directly applicable to the KO's level of training and experience and applies to the COR's level of training as it relates to the training provided by the KO. A COR relies on the KO to explain their responsibilities and the scope of their authority. They also rely upon the KO to provide an adequate quality assurance surveillance plan (QASP) and statement of work (SOW) which also is a reflection of that KO's training and experience. Insufficient staffing does not have roots in training and certification, but is represented as a critical vulnerability in the CCF. The data in Table 1 presents no change in total reports between 2010 and 2012. There is then an increase in reports in 2015. The lack of improvement suggests that either the DOD IGO recommendations were not applied by the contracting activities or that they were ineffective in correcting the problem. DOD IGO recommendation effectiveness is indeterminable due to the spike

in number of findings in the 2015 summary report. Without the ability to identify the effectiveness of the Oversight and Surveillance recommendations, they have been deemed non-applicable to this research's objective of improving health of the CCF officer corps.

- Property Accountability

Property Accountability was identified as having the second greatest number of findings in investigated reports, with 34 total findings. Root causes for poor Property Accountability share a close relationship to Oversight and Surveillance, which is specifically listed as the cause of Property Accountability failure in the 2015 summary report (Department of Defense [DOD], 2015). Property Accountability remains only a small portion of Oversight and Surveillance as all contracts require proper oversight, but not all contracts involve Government Furnished Property, Facilities, or Equipment. Table 1 shows a distinct drop in the number of reports between 2010 and 2012. Between 2012 and 2015, the number of findings only increased by one. The sharp decline of reports between 2010 and 2012 suggests effective DOD IGO recommendations were incorporated in 2010. The continued low number suggests a new approach is required to further reduce the problem area; however, the initial recommendations continue to be effective. The next step is to assess the recommendations for potential application in the CCF; however, in the case of Property Accountability, the DOD IGO recommendations are not applicable to the CCF. The CCF's critical vulnerabilities are more closely tied to Oversight and Surveillance as it applies to training and staffing, rather than Property Accountability. Recommendations in all three reports focused on utilizing an administrative department to maintain property accountability. Despite the relationship between Property Accountability and Oversight and Surveillance, the recommendations do not help to address Oversight and Surveillance problems outside of Property Accountability. As a result, the recommendations for Property Accountability cannot be adopted by the CCF to address their critical vulnerabilities.

- Requirements

The Requirements problem area follows closely behind Property Accountability, with 33 total findings. Requirements, as it pertains to the DOD IGO report, focuses on

ambiguity or changing requirements, out of scope requirements, and incomplete requirements. Though the KO is not the requirements generator and is not responsible for ambiguous or changing requirements, an experienced KO can often mitigate both issues and lessen or eliminate the negative impacts they bring to contract fulfillment. Out of scope and incomplete requirements are a direct reflection of the level and quality of training the customer has received for developing and defining their requirements. This problem area is abundant in CCF operations. Many of the CCF's customers heavily rely on KOs in assisting them in defining requirements. Early customer training can reduce ambiguous and incomplete requirements. Within the CCF, the KOs are responsible for customer training and successful training hinges upon that KO's knowledge and experience. This supports having multiple feeder MOSs for entry into the CCF, as the officer corps is subsequently able to provide greater breadth of knowledge and comprehensive understanding of the MAGTF and the warfighter needs. The decline in number of reports in 2012 suggests effective recommendations were implemented in 2010; however, the return to the original level in 2015 suggests that either previous recommendations were no longer adhered to or that a new stem of problems grew between 2012 and 2015. Problems associated with requirements identification can be related to the level of customer requirements training that is provided. This is the reason the CCF needs to retain experienced, well-qualified CCF officers to provide the requisite training to customers to alleviate problems associated to requirements definition.

- Contract Documentation

With Contract Documentation containing 29 total reports, this problem area comprises nearly 26 percent of the total reports investigated. The Contract Documentation problem stems from KOs not adequately supporting their contracting decisions in the contract file. Internal to the CCF, Contract Documentation problems are often the result of over-burdened KOs, and are linked to a lack of experience or familiarity with deployed systems used for writing and managing contract awards, along with limitations in deployed reach back support due to deficiencies in manpower staffing. Failures in contract documentation can also be directly linked to returning officers not understanding or being aware of new regulations pertaining to documentation

requirements. Contract Documentation shows the greatest improvement and maintenance among the problem areas in Table 1. The improvement should reveal Contract Documentation as a potential source for possible corrective measures to apply to the CCF; however, the summary reports lack substantial detail in sections dedicated to Contract Documentation. Instead of providing potential corrective measures, the summary reports reference the FAR and Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) and include an examples of poor contract documentation from their reporting window. This lack of information leaves the summary reports unusable for CCF application regarding Contract Documentation. In absence of explicit DOD IGO recommendations, the research analysis determined poor documentation can mitigated within the CCF by implementing a comprehensive reintegration program for officers returning to the CCF that addresses new documentation requirements so they can better enforce contract file oversight.

Though the CCF shares many of the systemic problem areas as experienced by DOD-wide contingency contracting, the potential corrective measures to remedy CCF critical vulnerabilities are not adequately addressed in the summary reports. Nonetheless, reports do reveal that inadequate training and understaffing is not only a problem contained within the CCF, but is also throughout DOD contingency contracting operations.

B. APRIL 2016 3006 MOS BILLETS AND VACANCIES DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

There are three key topics that require analysis when studying Table 2, as follows: billet staffing; distribution of vacancies; and data not provided by the table. Regarding billet staffing, the table displays nine vacant billets, leaving the CCF functioning at 73 percent of its Table of Organization (T/O) authorized strength which is 33 total officer billets. In addition to the nine vacant billets, 16 billets were filled by a rank other than the T/O grade, suggesting potential problems with promotions of officers eligible to serve in the CCF. Table 6 depicts the T/O strength to actual strength variance by rank based upon the data presented in Table 2. The two most significant areas of interest are the ranks of major and lieutenant colonel, which comprise the CCF's entire field grade officer

population. The CCF officer corps currently has two additional lieutenant colonels and is deficient seven majors. The deficiency of seven majors is cause for concern regarding fulfillment of field grade level billets in the CCF. Furthermore, one of the two additional lieutenant colonels is reported serving in the colonel's billet at MCB QUANTICO Director RCO in Table 2; however, rather than staffing all lieutenant colonel billets and filling one T/O major's billet with a lieutenant colonel, there are three lieutenant colonels currently filling major's billets. This creates a gap in lieutenant colonel T/O billets that is then filled by majors and captains. While serving in a billet above one's grade is beneficial for the Marine's promotion, the opposite holds true as well. Serving too long in a billet beneath one's grade is damaging to the Marine's career. Also noted is the experience lost when staffing billets with a lower rank.

Table 6. Total CCF Manpower Readiness Percentages as of April 1, 2016.
Adapted from Navarro (2016).

Rank	T/O Strength	Actual Strength	Variance	Percent Variance
Colonel	1	0	-1	-100%
Lieutenant Colonel	6	8	+2	+33%
Major	11	4	-7	-64%
Captain	15	12	-3	-20%

A widely accepted practice in the Marine Corps is filling a billet one higher or lower than the Marine's rank is acceptable for short durations. This is generally acceptable because these Marines are interacting on a regular basis with Marines in the billets above them who possess their same MOS. As a 3006, the Marines are often removed from the mentorship of higher 3006 ranks while serving in their CCF tour, and even more so when serving in their tours back in their PMOS. A Major serving as a 3006 is typically on their second tour in contracting and a lieutenant colonel is often on their third tour, with their experiences lending credibility to their ability to fulfill the CCF

billet in accordance with the T/O assigned grade. Of particular note, Table 2 reveals a captain filling a lieutenant colonel's billet. This is not only a daunting task for the captain, but also leaves the command without the experience that is expected to adequately lead the organization. In the end, CCF units are left understaffed and lacking vital experience required to successfully execute the mission.

Further analysis of Table 2 reveals that the distribution of vacancies is uneven, with two of the three 3rd MLG billets left vacant. 2nd MLG has one vacant billet and 1st MLG is fully staffed, though Table 2 reveals the lieutenant colonel billet is staffed by a captain. HQMC and Marine Corps Installations (MCI), Pacific are staffed at 50 percent. The remaining three vacancies leave those units with no officer leadership. These vacancies not only present a leadership and contracting oversight challenge, but also an administrative challenge when reporting enlisted performance.

Despite the data presented in Table 2, the information not captured in the table reveals much about the manpower deficiencies in the CCF officer corps. The table does not fully reflect the potential 3006 strength. Without capturing the 3006 officers serving tours back in their PMOS, the potential to fill vacant billets and the duration those billets remain unfilled remains an unknown variable, especially considering some of these 3006 officers may not desire to return for an additional CCF tour, choosing to remain in their PMOS. Table 2 also does not reflect the population selected on the CCLEB to become 3006s because it is not prudent to track the entering population until they have been certified, as they are not fully qualified to execute a CCF billet. Though it is not prudent to capture the officers in training, the table does include officers currently fulfilling their graduate level training requirements via the NPS distance learning curriculum for contract management. While these Marines do occupy the available T/O billets, they are not deployable, leaving a gap in capability and providing a false impression of unit readiness.

It is also important to note that Table 2 does not capture those retiring or exiting the Marine Corps. This gap in data tracking on Table 2 could potentially create a critical vulnerability in the CCF's level of experience and appropriate staffing considerations. This threat correlates to problems experienced in the civilian acquisition workforce

within the DOD. Professors Rene Rendon and Keith Snider cite a quote from Senator Levin in their book *Management of Defense Acquisition Projects* as saying, “The root cause of these and other problems in the defense acquisition system is our failure to maintain an acquisition work force with the resources and skills needed to manage the department’s acquisition system” (2008, p. 268). Relating back to the CCF, an overpopulation of lieutenant colonels, coupled with the number that are willing to hold lower grade billets alludes to the idea that several lieutenant colonels may retire in the relative near future. Attempting to track an individual Marine’s intent to retire or exit the Marine Corps is not a realistic task; however, experienced leadership leaving the MOS is still cause for great concern. This loss of experience could generate similar problems faced by the civilian acquisition workforce.

A detailed analysis of data from Table 2 has served to identify several critical vulnerabilities within the CCF. These critical vulnerabilities present themselves in the form of gapped billets due to officer critical shortfalls; misaligned staffing of billet grade to actual grade; inexperienced and unqualified (non-deployable) personnel filling T/O billets; and, an aging experience base approaching retirement.

C. SURVEY DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The survey data is used to confirm or deny assumptions pertaining to the research objective, and also to support conclusions and recommendations submitted in Chapter VI. Qualitative analysis of survey responses reconciled against literature review findings, served to strengthen the TIPS Model analysis of Personnel, Protocols, and Platforms yielding the resultant conclusions and recommendations for the future employment of officers in the CCF. Survey question discussion and analysis is provided in the following sub-sections.

Question 1: I am serving as or previously serves as: [officer or enlisted]

While a 58 percent response rate only provides a slight majority opinion in the overall survey responses, the near even split between enlisted and officer respondents depicted in Figure 1 is consistent with the percentages to the total solicited for survey feedback. The conclusion drawn from the respondent demographics demonstrates that

any great disparage in responses that is distinguished by officer and enlisted responses can be attributed to a cultural difference between the roles they carry in the Marine Corps and within the CCF.

Question 2: Does your command have a reintegration period for commissioned officers returning to the contracting MOS for a subsequent tour before they are able to deploy? If yes, what training is required?

The unanimous “no” response depicted in Figure 2 and additional comments provided support the conclusion that a formalized training program and reintegration period is necessary to re-educate officers who depart the contracting field for a PMOS billet and subsequently return for a CCF tour. Additionally, the Marine officers who return to their PMOS following a successful tour in contracting have little incentive to stay current on procurement policies or to even retain the knowledge learned in contracting since there may be no intent or opportunity to ever return to a contracting billet. Officers serving in a PMOS assignment have no requirement to maintain continuous learning points (CLP), attend contracting related training, or stay current on contracting procedures. Such performance is not captured on their FITREP performance evaluation; therefore, the incentive to do so is also diminished. Even if an officer attempted to maintain contracting proficiency, it may serve as a detriment to their career considering that maintaining proficiency in contracting can be a labor and time intensive effort that distracts Marine officers from PMOS duties.

Question 3, 4, & 5: Upon completion of OJT [for Captains], what role could commissioned officers [3: Captains, 4: Majors, 5: Lieutenant Colonels] have in the contracting community throughout their career progression? Please select all that apply.

The highest percentage yes for each rank depicted in Table 3 follows a logical progression. Captains, who are entry-level acquisition workforce members, must develop the fundamental skills of writing contracts to have any value to the Marine contracting community in subsequent tours. Ninety percent of participants selected “yes” to captains could write contracts upon completion of OJT. The skills learned while writing contracts are carried forward as rank, authority, and responsibility increase commensurate with experience. More skill and experience writing contracts as captains will provide the tools

necessary to groom a contracting member into a savvy acquisition professional capable of accepting the added responsibilities of carrying a warrant and obligating government funds. This conclusion is supported by the highest “yes” response rate for majors (95 percent) to carry a warrant and award contracts as the most effective employment of officers at this rank. Conversely, as rank increases so does the recommendation for a particular officer not to write contracts.

Participants selected writing contracts 90 percent of the time for captains, down to 67 percent for majors, and only 38 percent of participants felt that lieutenant colonels should write contracts. The conclusion drawn from this trend is that as rank increases so does the expectation for that officer to be less involved in the technical aspects of an MOS and more involved in the supervisory role of managing a staff. This concept is supported by the overwhelming response for lieutenant colonels to serve as a contracting activity OIC (100 percent). Other trends documented from Table 3 include an increased response to see more senior officers serving as an OCS advisor (Capt – 48 percent, Maj – 90 percent, LtCol – 95 percent) and also for the Acquisitions Command Billet (Capt – 5 percent, Maj – 24 percent, LtCol – 67 percent).

Two participants added the additional billet of deployed contingency contracting officer to responses to question 3. This further supports the conclusion that captains serving in a 3006 billet should focus on writing contracts since the principal function of a deployed Chief of Contracting Office (CCO) is to write contracts in support of mission requirements in a deployed environment. Additionally, these fundamental skills will carry forward in future contracting assignments. Similar comments were provided in regards to majors and lieutenant colonels serving in contracting as the comments provided for questions 4 and 5 also state that majors and lieutenant colonels could deploy as a CCO or Regional Contracting Center chief. One participant also included a recommendation for a Marine Corps Systems Command (MARCORSYSCOM) billet in his or her comment for question 5.

Question 6: Which of the following are documented as critical vulnerabilities that affect the mission readiness for contracting? Please select all that apply.

Table 4 displays officer manpower shortfalls are clearly the highest ranked risk area selected unanimously by all 21 survey participants. This data supports the impetus for conducting this thesis research effort, that impermanent officer assignment to contracting serves to detriment the Marine Corps' ability to efficiently perform its CCF mission. The unanimous response also indicates there is community interest in pursuing a permanent structure for officers in contracting. Further analysis to support this conclusion is covered in depth during the TIPS Model analysis.

By stark contrast, and based on the survey population of active duty Marines, it is not surprising that GS Manpower shortfalls in the contracting community fell out as the lowest ranked critical vulnerability, as 15 of the 21 survey participants selected "no" to this question. This type of response could be partially due to biases of the active duty respondents, none the less, the manpower structure of GS contracting employees may be an applicable recommendation for future research efforts as it does impact the Marine Corps' ability to meet its CCF mission. If officer manpower shortfalls in contracting do in fact exist it is expected that contracting activities will augment their contracting staff with civilian manpower to compensate for the lack of officers, but the extent to which this practice has occurred is unknown and such a study is beyond the scope of the research objectives of this thesis.

The second highest ranked critical vulnerability, officer technical proficiency, was selected "yes" 17 out of 21 times by survey participants. This critical vulnerability further supports the conclusions drawn from question 2 that advocated officers will require a training and reintegration period when returning to contracting for subsequent tours following assignment outside of the CCF. Similarly, impermanent officer assignment was selected as a critical vulnerability by 16 of the 21 survey participants which serves to validate assumptions that officer impermanence is a critical vulnerability for contracting in the Marine Corps.

All other responses to this question are not further addressed as they fail to identify a trend from which to draw conclusions and make recommendations. Five survey

participants included other critical vulnerabilities not provided in the survey list of choices, as follows:

“Lack of Contracting Training”

“Deployable manpower”

“Lack of LDO/WO options”

“Not a primary MOS/Lack of return tours”

“Too many enlisted Marines claim to be ‘nondeployable.’ Too many Officers just want the contracting warrant for a better resume and not to write or award contracts.”

These comments substantiate assumptions that the Marine Corps is not utilizing its trained 3006s in the most effective and efficient manner and the contracting community has varying opinions on how to address the issues associated to officer manpower shortfalls.

Question 7: What incentives (if any) could be offered to support retention of commissioned officers in the contracting community? Please select all that apply.

Participants from the survey voted DOD funded graduate degree programs as the highest retention incentive method. The Marine Corps recognizes the value of incentivizing entry into contracting through DOD funded graduate degree program since it restructured its entry-level training for officers in contracting to go through NPS beginning in 2014. This Joint Applied Project team will be the first set of officers since 2007 to obtain the AMOS of 3006 through the NPS curriculum. Despite the incentive, the graduate degree through NPS is only offered to provide training upon initial entry into contracting; not as an incentive method of returning for a subsequent tour.

Officers are prone to not return to contracting for subsequent tours after completing an initial assignment. A second tour or third tour in contracting as a 3006 is almost always voluntary for officers. The MOS occupational field sponsor for contracting, a position normally filled by a 3006 lieutenant colonel that works out of HQMC, LPC, will typically solicit return tours from officers that meet the right career

timing. All officers returning to contracting must have previously completed the necessary training for DAWIA certifications, and must be willing to return for a second or third tour. Often officers will view a second or third tour in contracting as a potential hazard to further one's career since the time away from their PMOS does not benefit them in anyway and is more likely to reduce their opportunities for promotion. Survey participants overwhelmingly voted that some form of incentive should be implemented as 20 out of 21 survey participants, depicted in Table 5, selected "no" to the None answer provided for the question. The potential conclusion drawn from this survey response is that the Marine Corps CCF could benefit from incentivizing officers to return to contracting. Additionally, several comments were offered by survey participants as to more appropriate incentive techniques, as follows:

"A primary MOS so they may remain competitive"

"Permanent officers"

"Higher promotion capability than LtCol"

"Ensure the individual is not penalized MOS credibility from his/her primary career field. Can lead to 2nd and 3rd tours in the contracting field and establish continuity and knowledge retention."

"Better advocacy on promotion boards, this is a career detriment. Change that and you will be able to retain individuals in the community. Otherwise they transfer back to their primary MOSs to enable them to get promoted."

Four out of the five comments offered in response to this question relate to issues surrounding the promotion opportunities for officers that return to contracting for subsequent tours, indicating officers are not likely to return to contracting for second or third tours because doing so will harm their career. The comment, "permanent officers," further supports the objective of this research, identifying a potential manpower and career path consideration for recruiting and retaining experienced, well-qualified officers for service in the CCF.

Finally, 11 of the 21 survey participants offered additional comments at the end of the survey ranging in topics from training opportunities, to retention techniques for contracting. The comments cited various focus areas and recommended courses of action, but these comments clearly indicate a strong sentiment that impermanent officer

assignments in contracting creates a series of problems that places undue stress on the CCF. One notable comment is as follows: “Bottom line: if the MC wants to really get serious about this career field, it needs a PMOS.” This discussion is furthered in the TIPS Model analysis which provides a detailed study into the research objective using the Personnel, Protocol, and Platform pillars. The 11 comments received are provided as direct quotes for review in Appendix A.

D. YODER’S MANDATORY PILLARS FOR INTEGRATIVE SUCCESS: AN ANALYSIS OF CCF PERSONNEL, PROTOCOL, AND PLATFORMS

Within this sub-chapter, a discussion and analysis of the results of this research’s literature review and data collection and analysis is provided through the lens of the TIPS Model. The three pillar analysis of the CCF officer structure is used to identify, dissect, and define root causes to problems within the following focus areas as it pertains to current Marine Corps and CCF practices: Personnel, Protocol, and Platforms. Analysis conducted under each of the pillars is briefly described as follows:

- Personnel: The analysis conducted under the personnel pillar focuses on the current capability to utilize the CCF officer corps to effectively and efficiently meet operating force requirements while determining impacts on the CCF’s total mission readiness. This analysis will also include appropriate accession pipeline and training considerations.
- Protocol: The protocol pillar will include an analysis of the doctrine that establishes the entry criteria for officers serving in the CCF and the impacts associated to the transient nature of Marine KOs. The protocol analysis will also discuss career path considerations for officers serving in the CCF.
- Platform: The analysis of contracting platforms will include a review of required systems access, training requirements, and an evaluation of technical proficiencies achieved by officers during a contracting tour. Outcomes of this analysis will be reconciled against current practices to analyze potential detriments to the CCF when officers are absent for three years or greater.

The results of the TIPS Model analysis conducted within this sub-chapter, combined and synced with other research data findings will inform the recommendations and conclusions of this project as they pertain to the research objective.

1. Personnel

The personnel pillar of the TIPS Model will be analyzed from three distinct but interrelated perspectives. The research will assess mission readiness based on Marine Corps current capabilities. Thereafter, analysis of appropriate accession pipeline considerations will be conducted. Finally, current capabilities will be compared against current force requirements.

a. Mission Readiness Based on Marine Corps Current Capabilities

The Marine Corps strongly emphasizes mission readiness amongst all of its forces, and achieves readiness through vigorous training initiatives. Marine Corps commissioned officers that serve as 3006s are required to achieve training readiness standards that ultimately support the accomplishment of Mission Essential Tasks for reporting in the Defense Readiness Reporting System. They do so by gaining and sustaining proficiency in the training events prescribed in the NAVMC 3500.64B Supply Administration and Operations T&R Manual at both collective (unit) and individual levels (DON, 2014). See Appendix B for current listing of 3006 T&R standards adapted from the NAVMC 3500.64B. Additionally, the Marine Corps is currently drafting a new MCO governing the CCF Program. Version 21 of this draft MCO was coming out of General Officer review at the time of this writing (DON, in press). Included as appendices to this draft order are an IDP and CCM that further develop and define an extensive set of proficiency checks that contracting Marines are to obtain under the purview of their Reporting Senior's supervision.

Based on the requirements delineated in the T&R and draft MCO, it is evident that the Marine Corps takes a heavy, vested interest in developing a strong contracting capability in order to maintain mission readiness and strengthen its forward presence, being the first to fight in any location on the globe. This fact cannot be overemphasized when it comes to the Marine Corps 3006 presence, which is a low-density, high-demand AMOS that only commissioned officers can obtain. The Marine Corps is investing tens of thousands of dollars on each of its commissioned officers it selects to become 3006s; a

dominant portion of those training dollars being spent on graduate level schooling provided by NPS in the 835 Master of Science in Contract Management Program.

The Marine Corps 3006 presence only consists of a T/O authorized strength of 33 Marine officers serving in CCF billets at any given time (see Table 2). Despite this authorization, the Marine Corps is currently gapped nine 3006 billets across all ranks, as depicted in Tables 2 and 6, and in particular, the gap mainly affects field grade officer billets. Table 6 displays total CCF manpower readiness percentages sorted by applicable rank, based upon the number of billets filled compared to those gapped. This gap serves to deteriorate the Marine Corps' current capabilities within its CCF, as appropriately staffed officer leadership and oversight, particularly senior level officers, is lacking within contracting activities throughout the Marine Corps. This problem has been persistent enough that the Marine Corps has published MARADMIN 122/15 stating, "Due to the critical shortage of 3006 contracting officers in the Marine Corps, vacancies in some billets will be unavoidable" (2015b, p. 1). The MARADMIN also states, "Every effort will be made to fill key billets. An appropriate memo will be placed in the permanent records of all officers selected for follow on tours to ensure no unintended negative consequences [pertaining to promotion] occur" (USMC, 2015b, p. 1). This admission of a gapped capability is designed to temper supported commander's and customer's expectations of support from the Marine Corps CCF, while simultaneously not hurting the officer's career promotion potential. Moreover, it identifies the potential need to address problems within the 3006 career progression path, as well as enforcement mechanisms and incentives for officers to return to subsequent tours in the CCF.

The small structure of the CCF officer corps does not provide for redundancies. Marine officers serve in two distinct roles within the CCF. One role is serving in an OCS advisory billet at MARFOR commands or at one of the MEFs, and as applicable at other dedicated commands such as Marine Forces Special Operations Command (MARFORSOC). 3006s also serve as warranted KOs at the ECP established within each of the MEFs, or at an SE or other dedicated command (DON, in press). With such a small authorized strength combined with the problem of gapped billets, the Marine Corps' current capability to achieve mission readiness is degraded causing a greater burden on the

enlisted members serving in the CCF as well as burdening supported customers. One example of degraded support and mission readiness is the ability for the Marine Corps to adequately deploy 3006s in an OCOC during large-scale operations. This cell is designed to perform functions such as OCS planning; requirements development assistance; contract support prioritization and validation processes assistance; and COR management. OCS advisors within this cell coordinate liaison support and provide a conduit between the GCC and external contracting support for Marine units in the AOR (CJCS, 2014). These crucial functions directly affect success outcomes in combat, further underlining the need for the Marine Corps to address capability gaps in the 3006 structure of the CCF.

The Marine Corps CCF has made recent strides to improve its 3006 readiness, particularly closing its DAU schoolhouse located at Camp Johnson, North Carolina in 2014. It now sends its Marine officers through graduate level education to obtain Level I, II, and III certification eligibility in contracting, with the follow-on requirement to complete one year of OJT training at a Regional Contracting Office under one of the MCI Commands before assignment to the ECP (USMC, 2014). Despite this stride towards educational improvement, the Marine Corps needs to revisit its accession pipeline considerations and the 3006 career progression path, as well as retention incentives to maintain a strong presence of 3006s and alleviate future gaps in billets that degrade its CCF capabilities.

b. Appropriate Accession Pipeline Considerations

Traditionally, 3006 sourcing has come from three distinct MOS fields that work intimately with one another to accomplish mission requirements, these being supply officers, comptrollers, and logistics officers. This blend of expertise lends diversity to the talents these selected officers bring into the CCF upon their accession. Additionally, Marine officers are selected for contracting after having completed a minimum of one successful tour in their PMOS, lending credible MOS experience that further enables the CCF's critical thinking and decision making capabilities. In 2015, the Marine Corps (2015b) announced changes to its accession pipeline considerations, stating the

following: “All training for 3006 contingency contracting officers is either through selection on the CCLEB, for Supply Officers only, to attend the NPS resident’s course in acquisition and contract management or selection to the NPS distance learning program for contract management” (p. 1). This MARADMIN established Supply officers as the only MOS field that will be drawn from to create the Marine Corps’ next generation of officers in serving in the CCF. Prior to this announcement, the Marine Corps publicly recognized that experiences throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom validated contracting as a critical capability that requires highly skilled and professional officers. It also stated that NPS would replace the DAU schoolhouse as the primary source of accession training in order to provide for a healthy and desirable KO career path (USMC, 2014). The combination of these changes clearly indicates that the Marine Corps recognizes the need to source the most highly qualified officers for contracting, and they are attempting to incentivize this by offering a master’s degree in order to foster competition amongst those officers that desire selection into the field via the CCLEB. This ensures the cream of the crop is selected to fill this critical capability; however, the Supply officer only eligibility criteria potentially inhibits diversified talents from the finance and logistics communities from bolstering the Marine Corps’ overall ability to provide high quality contracting support.

The Marine Corp has published NAVMC 1200.1A W/CH1, also known as the MOS Manual, which defines occupational specialties found on the T/O in the Total Force Structure Management System that leads to generation of the Authorized Strength Report (DON, 2015). According to this manual, supply officers provide supply support insight for operational planning requirements; supervise transportation of supplies and equipment; manage the transmittal of public funds; participate in the budget process, administer, and expend allotted funds; and make necessary recommendations to the Commanding Officer regarding supply support procedures. This MOS description makes supply officers a prime candidate for contracting accession; however, the manual also states that KOs work closely with the finance and supply communities to ensure proper execution and expenditure of appropriated funds. Because of the intimate link between Comptrollers and contracting, an argument could be made that the accession pipeline

should also be reopened to those other than supply officers, namely comptrollers. There is also added value in allowing logistics officers to continue to enter into contracting as they are often heavily involved in planning conferences for operations and exercises, serving as the voice for G-4 and S-4 coded shops for requirements related concerns. Additionally, according to doctrine stated in the MCRP 4-11E, Contingency Contracting, contracting falls under the purview of the G-4. The G-4 retains operational control of all contracting personnel within the major subordinate command's area of operations unless otherwise directed by the Commanding General (USMC, 2009). This doctrine further substantiates the relevance of the logistic officer as an appropriate feeder MOS for accession into contracting.

The Marine Corps could consider the use of extended length contracts for officers that obtain the 3006 MOS. Officers serving in 3006 billets are members of the CCF and ultimately they serve as members of the Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (AT&L) workforce under the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (OUSD) for AT&L. CCF qualification requirements are codified in 10 U.S. Code § 1724; specifically, the law requires completion of at least 24 semester credit hours or the equivalent of study from an accredited institution of higher education or similar educational institution in any of the disciplines of accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management (10 U.S. Code § 1724, 2011). Beyond these requirements, DAU provides three certification levels for contracting professionals obtained via the successful completion of a plethora of Acquisition (ACQ coded), Contracting (CON coded), and Continuous Learning (CLC coded) courses. Certification eligibility is additionally tied to length of contracting experience one has completed in an acquisition coded billet identification code (BIC). Experience requirements range from one, two, and four years for each level of certification, respectively (Defense Acquisition University, 2016). Additionally, within the Marine Corps Acquisition Procedures Supplement, the Marine Corps has established a five level Contracting Officer Warrant Program delineating even further training and experience requirements for contracting warrant eligibility at each of the specified levels (USMC, 2016b). Furthermore, the draft MCO for the CCF provides

an extensive description of roles and responsibilities pertaining to billet positions throughout the CCF. Most of these descriptions require high levels of past experience in contracting at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war in order to enable the officer to effectively execute the requirements of the billet in accordance with doctrinal methodology. This exhaustive list of training and experience requirements, combined with the perpetually changing *FAR* regulations should serve as a demand signal to retain KOs within the contracting specialty for periods greater than a standard three-year rotation back into their PMOS. Similarities can be drawn to the aviation and legal communities within the Marine Corps. For example, due to the extensive training requirements to become a naval aviator, pilots incur a 96-month or 72-month active duty service obligation, primarily served within the aviation community, based upon the platform they end up flying (DON, 2003). This ensures the Marine Corps retains a well-trained officer to carry out a highly technical profession, and contracting should be no different. Currently, every officer is screened by the CCLEB for the fiscal year in which they are set to conduct a permanent change of station. Under the new accession construct, a Supply officer's selection to attend NPS and accession into contracting is mandated as opposed to the officer electing to be selected for a move into contracting. This selection process would need revision in order to accommodate longer active duty service obligations, as it would be unfair to require an officer to accept extended service obligations based on a choice that is made for them. The solution to this problem is beyond the scope of this research; however, this research strongly suggests that appropriate authority should review this consideration of extended length contracts for CCF officers.

Upon accession into contracting, all CCF personnel are required to participate in an IDP to ensure that core competencies are trained to and sustained to enable the CCF to deliver mission critical capabilities (DON, in press). The draft MCO contains a sample IDP as an appendix, and it also contains a CCM as an additional appendix to be used in conjunction with the IDP to train to competencies. The CCO must ensure the implementation and management of a robust training program combining the use of these two tools. Use of these tools is in keeping with best practices, and this research suggests

that officers could be assigned an IDP mentor that monitors their career progression and signs off on proficiency and sustainment levels achieved after the designated trainer(s) have assessed the officer's performance on an individual task. Officers should subsequently be deployed in real world operations based upon the levels of technical competency they have demonstrated, and the decision for their assignment on a particular deployment should be heavily influenced by the IDP mentor working in conjunction with the CCO to ensure best fit for the anticipated mission complexity levels.

c. Current Capabilities Compared Against Current Force Requirements

The importance of commissioned officer advocacy within the contracting community cannot be overstated, particularly when analyzing the differences between command authority and contracting authority; as contracting authority is ultimately what enables the KO's capabilities. HQMC contracting authority originates from the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition) and is delegated to the Deputy Commandant (DC), I&L at HQMC. With the exception of those actions reserved specifically for head of contracting activity (HCA) approval, DC, I&L has delegated full authority to the Assistant Deputy Commandant (ADC), I&L under LPC (USMC, 2009). Contracting authority is further delegated by ADC I&L, LPC to the operating forces ECPs in 1st MLG, 2d MLG, and 3d MLG as well as to SE contracting offices within the Marine Corps Field Contracting System (DON, in press). Of concern to this research discussion is the contracting authority delegated to KOs that are slated to deploy with supported commands via the ECP. As the MCRP 4-11E states, "The commander retains operational control of the contracting team; however, contracting authority and oversight of the contingency contracting office remains the responsibility of the HCA" (2009, p.2-2). Moreover, the draft MCO adds "KOs must be placed within the organization where they can maintain functional independence and make sound business decisions without improper or undue influence" (in press, p. 1-4)." The commissioned officer serving in the CCF is of key importance in the enforcement of the clear lines of authority that CCF personnel must follow, particularly when the KO is an enlisted service member. Complaints have arose in the past where commands receiving contracting support from enlisted KOs are more inclined to attempt to enforce their command authority over the

Marine in order to procure what it is that they want. The ECP CCO and their staff serves as critical reach back support to this KO in order to clearly articulate and enforce that the two distinct lines of authority cannot be crossed. One mechanism of enforcement is the threat that the KO's contracting authority could be stripped if the CCO determines it necessary to revoke the KO's warrant in a situation where the command authority is attempting to force an illegal action. The ability to provide such push back requires well-seasoned commissioned officer support to eliminate undue command influence on enlisted contracting personnel. As an additional contracting authority enforcement measure, first-level evaluations of KOs must be performed within the contracting career chain (DOD, 2005).

Officers accomplish the requirements for obtaining contracting experience through OJT conducted at SE locations such as the Regional Contracting Offices (RCO) under the different MCIs. Before the CCF Realignment in 2015, the majority of CCF Marines were assigned under the SE to provide support within the RCOs when not serving on a deployment. Through this relationship, some RCOs became reliant on the Marine support provided to augment their civilian staff workload, and experienced officers were valuable assets utilized to interface with key garrison support staffs that are viewed with keen interest from high-level authorities. With the CCF realignment toward the ECP construct within the MLGs, the displacement of officers out of the SE potentially results in disrupted contracting support to garrison units and installations. Despite the realignment, the ECP and SE relationship still exists as all entry-level CCF personnel are still required to OJT within the SE in order to obtain the best training and contracting experience commensurate with the contracts that are required in the expeditionary environment (DON, in press). It is recognized that the realignment does create a larger burden on SEs to now serve as the training grounds for entry-level CCF personnel. Additionally, officers serving in an OJT status are not knowledgeable enough to speak intelligently on contracting matters pertaining to the key garrison support staffs as mentioned above. Despite the loss of experienced personnel, the SE does gain the benefit of increased workload support, particularly as an OJT Marine becomes more competent in their abilities throughout their tenure in the SE.

Officers trained in contracting are threatened with the loss of skills upon completion of their OJT at the SE. The majority of the CCF's capability resides at the ECP, where Marines are slated to support operational deployments and exercises while also providing reach back support for ongoing operations. Upon completion of NPS training and OJT, officers report to the ECP for follow-on duties. The contracting authority for the ECP is limited to contracts executed in support of exercises and deployments for Joint Force or MAGTF unit operations where the performance of the contract is to be executed in support of exercises or operations being conducted OCONUS (DON, in press). This limitation on contracting authority inhibits the ECP's ability to aid in garrison contracting support requirements. Moreover, contracting is a perishable skillset; therefore, officers that transfer to the ECP need to be engaged in real-world operations as soon as possible to retain the skills obtained during their training. As a possible recommendation for officer employment, if a deployment or exercise is available, but at a future date where the Pre-deployment Training Program cycle has yet to commence for the operation, the CCF should potentially look at establishing Fleet Assistance Program (FAP) agreements between the ECP and SE, beyond the extent of existing OJT agreements, that provide officers an opportunity to continue to hone their contracting skills while serving as KOs and contract specialists in the SE. This would enable officers to sustain and further develop contracting proficiencies prior to executing operational requirements, and during dwell periods between deployment cycles. The CCO of the ECP could work hand-in-hand with the CCO of the SE to ensure that the officer is appropriately assigned responsibilities. Moreover, this would increase the utilization of officers within the CCF and serve to capitalize on the high cost of education that they receive as an entry-level member of the CCF. To further support this potential recommendation, the draft MCO already has a provision built into it, stating, "Due to the limited number of CCF Marines in the Marine Corps, all qualified Marines in SE offices are subject to supporting joint individual augment billets and Marine Corps specific mission deployments, when globally sourced or tasked through request for forces or request for capabilities" (in press, p. 4-14). This provision means that an officer is easily

accessible when operational requirements arise; and de-FAP back to the ECP could take place within 24 hours to employ the officer accordingly.

In 2015, the Marine Corps directed commanders to establish SRRB for the review of service contracts, with validation authority established no lower than a first General Officer or Senior Executive Service level (USMC, 2015b). The SRRB screens all service requirements packages for contract actions that exceed the simplified acquisition threshold, currently \$150,000.00. The technical expertise to establish such a review board rests solely with experienced officers and senior enlisted members of the CCF that have well-founded backgrounds in contracting and are capable of interfacing with General Officer level staff to validate the fiscal law elements of purpose, time, amount, as well as clear up ambiguities that exist in requirements packages. The increased oversight on reviewing service contracts, due to the complexities involved in defining them and paying for them, lends additional credibility to establishing officers as a more permanent feature in the CCF, in line with extended active duty service obligations for officers in contracting. Furthermore, another potential recommendation is for the Marine Corps to specifically assess CCF officer corps capabilities within the CCF concurrent with the conduct of annual capabilities based assessments. These assessments are directed in the draft MCO in order to ensure proper training, education, and readiness to execute the OCS mission within the CCF (DON, in press). The SRRB program is one example of a functional area that could be specifically reviewed as part of the capability assessment of officers. Advising on a SRRB panel is one of the many critical functions of OCS that an officer must learn as they progress in their career in contracting; demanding they grow as an expert in the field. Arguably, steady three year rotations in and out of the CCF do not adequately prepare officers to effectively advise on requirements that increase in complexities when moving up the scale from tactical levels of contracting, and into the operational and strategic levels of contracting. Findings from annual capabilities based assessments could also serve to indicate to HQMC whether or not extended active duty service obligations are a valid need for consideration.

Finally, research has indicated the potential to garner higher-level advocacy for officers in the CCF. The John Warner National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year

2007 mandated, “The assignment of a senior commissioned officer with appropriate acquisition experience and qualifications to act as head of contingency contracting during combat operations, post-conflict operations, and contingency operations, who shall report directly to the commander of the combatant command in whose area of responsibility the operations occur” (Pub. L. 109-364, 2006, sec. 2333). Based on this requirement, another potential recommendation is for the Marine Corps to adopt a Deputy to Head of Contingency Contracting as a Colonel or Brigadier General billet, to be filled by a 3006. A senior commissioned officer, by law, is supposed to act as head of contingency contracting, which would justify the need for each service component to develop a deputy billet that serves to make liaison with the appointed head of contingency contracting with matters regarding the individual service components’ employment of its CCF manpower. The creation of such a billet within the T/O structure would create an opportunity that would incentivize officers to desire to grow and promote within billets in the CCF.

2. Protocol

Under the TIPS Model, the protocol pillar of the CCF is specifically analyzed to discuss MOS entrance criteria of CCF officers. This discussion and analysis is not limited to the Marine Corps, rather the analysis is expanded to encompass the entrance criteria for officers entering into contracting in other branches of service. A greater understanding of different service branch protocols should better inform recommendations and conclusions that the Marine Corps may be able to adapt in order to achieve greater efficiencies in accomplishing the CCF mission.

The protocol pillar of the TIPS Model “represents the existing or desirable set of rules and procedures, including sound business, planning, and military doctrine, that govern the” eligibility requirements, roles, and responsibilities established for Marine Corps officers serving in the contracting field (Yoder, Long, & Nix, 2012, p. 365). The central theme of protocol analysis revolves around how commissioned officers in the Marine Corps enter the contracting field and what opportunities exist for their growth as a subject matter expert in the contracting community. This section also examines the protocols governing the entrance criteria for officers assigned to contracting in the

following branches of service: Army, Air Force, and Navy. Protocol findings from other services will be compared against the established Marine Corps protocols. Throughout this section, potential recommendations are offered as to how commissioned officers can best support Marine Corps contracting functions and continue to stay competitive for promotion among other Marine officers within their MOS.

a. Commissioned Officers in Marine Corps Contracting

In the Marine Corps, contracting is not an entry-level MOS for both officer and enlisted personnel. Service members must complete at least one tour in their PMOS prior to applying for a contracting position. Officers must also have met performance standards to qualify for career designation and accepted appointment for indefinite active duty service which requires a minimum of 540 days of observed FITREP evaluations (DON, 2014). This 540 day evaluation usually occurs in each Marine officer's first three and a half years of service as an officer, as some reports may be unobserved within that time. Contracting is not unique in regard to the officer acceptance of career designation to continue on active duty beyond the preliminary three and a half year period; however, the CCF has the added complexity of accepting personnel with no direct prior experience in contracting. Personnel arrive in an occupational field rooted with highly technical and legal jargon that requires easily two years or more of regular day-to-day involvement to gain proficiency and become useful in the field. Considering the normal rotation time for service members to transfer billet assignments and duty stations occurs approximately every three years, the ability for officers serving in the contracting field to develop into subject matter experts becomes significantly challenged.

The Marine Corps has recognized the challenges associated to officer training and retention in contracting and has established protocols to link contracting and supply specialties making supply a NMOS for contracting. The ultimate goal under this protocol is that future officers serving in contracting will all have the primary specialty of supply officer so that, "CCF officers should be rotated between 3002 [supply officer MOS] and 3006 assignments in order to maintain CCF proficiency while remaining competitive for promotion in their primary 3002 MOS" (USMC, in press, p. 3-10). In 2014, the Marine

Corps changed the eligibility criteria for officers to enter the CCF by limiting entry exclusively to supply officers. This transition allowed 3006 manpower to be more seamlessly interchanged between a PMOS and an AMOS, but removed the possibility of qualified officers from other MOSs to enter the CCF. Contracting personnel work closely with the finance community in the expenditure of appropriated funds, and also with logisticians during the performance of contracts, particularly contracts for life support services awarded by CCF warranted KOs. Contracting must also work closely with operations officers to best support unit needs within a commander's intent and appropriate planning and time considerations. By restricting entrance criteria eligibility to only supply officers, the Marine Corps has limited the opportunities to obtain well-qualified officers from other specialties that could provide valuable experience inputs to the CCF. Supply is only one function in much a larger model that governs the contracting process. As a potential recommendation, the Marine Corps could once again allow other specialties such as comptrollers and logistics officers to enter the contracting field via CCLEB selection.

The recommendation to continue utilizing officers from the supply community would remain in effect. Supply officers have unique skills that are easily transferable and directly relevant to the contracting community. For example, supply officers are often assigned as the action officer for most contracting functions at the unit level, such as appointment as the AO for the GCPC program as previously discussed. This appointment demonstrates a supply officer's ability to execute and oversee contracting transactions performed below the micro-purchase threshold which often represents the highest volume of contracting transactions for any given unit. Supply officers have direct exposure and oversight of this program while serving in their PMOS, giving the supply community relevant insight and understanding of the contracting process. While this aspect of supply neatly fits into a contracting model, many of the duties assigned a supply officer do not have any relevance in the contracting community.

Many of the day-to-day activities performed by a supply officer are not directly transferrable to the contracting field, and any skills that are easily transferrable represent a very minute portion of that officer's time conducting day-to-day business. As an

example, property accountability and funds management are central to a supply officer's daily activities, both demanding equal levels of oversight and attention. While funds management is one aspect of supply operations, it is prioritized among competing interests of other supply functional areas. Funds management is crucial in the world of contracting operations; therefore, a more suited direct link to accomplishing this aspect of contracting could be to draw on personnel from the finance community to leverage their direct and vast amounts of relevant expertise in funds management.

In order to make recommendations for the best pathway to enter contracting for Marine officers, this research will analyze and discuss the protocols governing the entrance criteria for officers entering into contracting in other service components. A discussion of the protocols governing the entrance criteria, training, and development of officers serving in Army, Air Force, and Navy contracting follows.

b. Commissioned Officers in Air Force Contracting

Officers serving in the Air Force contracting workforce select contracting as their desired MOS upon recruitment into military service, and are subsequently assigned the 64P MOS designation as a primary career field. These officers receive formal MOS training at the Mission Ready Contracting Officer Course at Wright Patterson Air Force Base. According to the Air Force career development guidebook under skill and career progression information, "there are three developmental stages: tactical, operational, and strategic. Each stage is important and provides unique experiences, and collectively, provide an integrated and progressive approach to building contracting competencies" (Department of the Air Force, 2014, p. 21). Per the guidebook the tactical level is approximately 0–10 years of contracting experience, the operational level is approximately 10–20 years of contracting experience, and the strategic level is approximately 20-plus years of contracting experience.

(1) Tactical

Officers in the Air Force contracting community begin their careers with entry-level operational contracting experience and are charged with providing, "cradle-to-grave contract support to meet the needs of installation commanders, deployed commanders,

and resident, tenant, and supported units” (DoAF, 2014, p. 23). This entry-level model for the Air Force is similar to the Marine Corps protocols for assigning officers to an OJT period at RCOs where Marine officers will support installation and operational commanders through contracting requirements ranging from one-time buys of supplies and services such as video teleconferencing equipment to bulldozer repair services.

Following the entry level exposure at the tactical level, these Airmen move up to an intermediate sub-level gauged at approximately 4–10 years of contracting experience where they gain systems experience and have the opportunity to support major acquisition programs at the Air Force Materiel Command and Space and Missile Systems Center. Per the Air Force career guidebook, “64P [contracting] officers are high demand, low density assets in the acquisitions community which makes each and every 64P officer vitally important to the program offices in which they serve” (DoAF, 2014, p. 25). These Air Force officers work exclusively as Procuring Contracting Officers gaining exposure to both installation, operational, and acquisitions contract support for essentially the first 10 years in the field.

The Air Force career model is in stark contrast to the Marine Corps protocols of inducting second-tour officers from a PMOS into an assignment to an AMOS of 3006 with the initial billet lasting three years in duration. Similarities exist for the entry-level assignment to installation contracting activities where Marine officers will serve for approximately three years writing installation support contracts, but for Air Force officers, after their initial tour in contracting these officers are offered additional career development opportunities to grow within Major Defense Acquisition Programs (MDAP), which the Marine Corps currently does not offer as an established career path.

(2) Operational

The operational level of an Air Force officer serving in contracting occurs approximately during years 10–20, and per the guidebook, “is characterized by an increase in responsibility and authority with leadership and career broadening opportunities” (DoAF, 2014, p. 28). Billet opportunities that exist for officers serving at the operational level of contracting include OCS planner, joint duty assignments through

such programs as the Army-Air Force Exchange Service, Defense Commissary Agency, Special Operations Command, and “a variety of joint systems program offices (e.g., Joint Strike Fighter)” (DoAF, 2014, p. 32). Squadron command is also encouraged for the field grade officers serving in the operational level of contracting. The guidebook remarks that, “Squadron command, and equivalent DCMA tertiary Contract Management Office command, positions are valuable leadership opportunities within the contracting career field” (DoAF, 2014, p. 31). Marine Corps field grade officers serving in contracting are typically returning for a second tour following a PMOS tour of three years or more where they had little to no exposure to contracting duties. The billet opportunities for Marine Corps field grade officers include OCS planners on the MEF staff, and serving as the director or deputy of a RCO. The Marine Corps does not currently offer any joint duty exchange programs or command opportunities for field grade officers serving in contracting as the availability of qualified field grade officers possessing a contracting background is in short supply.

(3) Strategic

According to the guidebook, “In order to achieve rank at the strategic level (i.e., colonel and above), an officer should develop and integrate a deep understanding of Air Force missions and how tactics, techniques, procedures, technology and people achieve synergistic results and desired effects” (DoAF, 2014, p. 35). The Marine Corps does not currently possess a strategic level contracting career path as the senior ranking officer assigned to contracting is a lieutenant colonel. Additionally, it is rare for Marine officers to return to contracting for a third tour due to the extended time out of their primary MOS and due to the manpower demands of field grade officers across all MOS communities.

c. Commissioned Officers in Army Contracting

The Army seeks second tour officers at the grade of O-2 and above to apply for entrance into the 51C MOS (contracting) via an annual accession board that is highly competitive. Each soldier must have 24 undergraduate business hours to be given consideration at the accession board for the 51C MOS. The Army follows a reclassification process similar to the Marine Corps as it pulls from existing specialties

such as logistics or supply, but any MOS is eligible for entry into 51C given the officer meets the 24 business credit hours prerequisite. Similar to officers in the Marine Corps, Army officers selected to enter contracting retain their PMOS designation (e.g., a logistics officer will still maintain their logistics officer designation), but unlike officers in the Marine Corps, Army officers enter the contracting field permanently. Both the Marine Corps and Army utilize a secondary MOS designation for contracting, but Army officers have no requirement to transition back to their PMOS whereas Marine Corps officers are expected to return to their PMOS following a standard three-year tour in contracting. The Army accession pipeline for contracting was concisely summarized by Marine Captain Justin Eastman (2016) in his research paper for Expeditionary Warfare School:

The Army has a more effective model that allows their officers to specialize in functional areas. Every quarter the Army publishes a VTIP [Voluntary Transfer Incentive Program] In/Out chart that shows by commissioning year group what branches are allowing officers out and what specialized functional areas are allowing officers in. Army officers that move into functional specialized areas are allowed to remain in those MOSs for the duration of their career, if they desire, without being viewed as detrimental to career progression through O-5. The only negative impact that an Army officer may incur is that it will be more difficult for them to receive command at the O-5 level, particularly if their functional area has little correlation to their original branch. An example of this would be if a signals officer moved into an acquisition functional area. (p. 5)



The Voluntary Transfer Incentive Program (VTIP) is the avenue from which Army officers can transfer to a branch or functional area, such as contracting, from a PMOS. According to the Officer Personnel Management Directorate the general eligibility criteria for Army active duty officers to enter the contracting functional area include:

- Minimum grade of 1LT(P)
- Graduate of the Captains Career Course (or enrolled in the Captains Career Course)
- Successful completion of the appropriate key/developmental position in the grade of CPT (HRC, 2016)

Army officers entering the contracting field receive their entry-level training via the Army Acquisition Basic Course at the University of Alabama, Huntsville. This five-week course provides DAWIA Level I training in program management and contracting by covering “the legal and regulatory policies and objectives that shape the acquisition process and the implementation of these policies and objectives by the U.S. Army” (Gambles, Johnson, & Jones, 2009, p. 26). This five week entry-level training in DAWIA Level I provided to Army officers varies significantly from the training provided to Marine Corps officers who are sent to NPS for 18–24 months to receive equivalencies for DAWIA Level I, II, and III contracting certification.

The United States Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC) oversees the entrance criteria for officers seeking a career in contracting and acquisitions, and “serves as the Proponent of Military Functional Area 51-Acquisition [the Army Acquisition Corps]” (Army Human Resource Command, 2016, p. 1). Additionally, “the FA51 proponent will assess and submit reclassification actions through the U.S. Army Human Resources Command Reclassification Branch using the “Whole Soldier Concept” (Gambles, Johnson, & Jones, 2009, p. 26). The USAASC also monitors officer skill progression by rank through use of a career development path similar to Table 7.

Table 7. Army Contracting Officer Career Roadmap.
Source: Gambles, Johnson and Jones (2014).

RANK SKILL LEVEL	CPT 	MAJ 	LTC 	COL 
OPERATING FORCE	CONTRACTING OFFICER CCT CONTRACTING BN STAFF OFFICER CONTRACTING BDE STAFF OFFICER	CONTRACTING OFFICER TEAM LDR CCT CONTRACTING BN STAFF OFFICER	CSL – CONTRACTING COMMAND CONTRACTING OFFICER SCCT LDR CONTRACTING BRIGADE STF OFFICER	CSL – CONTRACTING CMD/PARC
GENERATING FORCE ASSIGNMENT (not all inclusive)	ASSISTANT PRODUCT MANAGER OPERATIONAL TEST OFFICER COMBAT DEVELOPER	ASAL/ALT/DA STAFF OFF/ASSIGN OFF CONTRACTING OFFICER (USACE/DOD) DEPUTY PROJECT MANAGER OPERATIONAL TEST OFFICER COMBAT DEVELOPER	CSL – PRODUCT MANAGER CONTRACTING TM LD (USACE/DOD) ASAL/ALT/DA STAFF OFFICER DIRECTOR OF CONTRACTING DEPUTY PROJECT OFFICER	CSL – PROJECT MANAGER DEPUTY PEO ASAL/ALT/DA STAFF OFFICER ECC/ACC STAFF OFFICER
PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION	CPT CAREER COURSE AABC/AIACC/LAB	AABC/AIACC/LAB INTERMEDIATE LEVEL EDUCATION INTERMEDIATE QUALIFICATION COURSE	PRE-COMMAND COURSE	SENIOR SERVICE COLLEGE PRE-COMMAND COURSE
CAREER DEVELOPMENT	FUNCTIONAL EXPERIENCE		BROADENING EXPERIENCE	
FUNCTIONAL TRAINING	ASI: 5P (PARACHUTIST) ASI: 3B (AIR ASSAULT)	ASI: IX (GRN LEAN SIX SIGMA)	ASI: IY (BLK LEAN SIX SIGMA) ASI: A3 (FORCE DEVELOPMENT)	
SELF DEVELOPMENT (STRUCTURED)	MISSION SUPPORT TRAINING CONTINUOUS LEARNING POINTS	MISSION SUPPORT TRAINING CONTINUOUS LEARNING POINTS	CONTINUOUS LEARNING POINTS	CONTINUOUS LEARNING POINTS
SELF DEVELOPMENT (GUIDED)	ADVANCED CIVIL SCHOOLING TRAINING WITH INDUSTRY			
CIVILIAN EDUCATION GOALS	BA/BS 24 HOURS (BUSINESS)	MA/MS (BUSINESS DISCIPLINE)	MA/MS	MA/MS
CERTIFICATIONS	DAWIA LEVEL I/II	DAWIA LEVEL II/III	DAWIA LEVEL III	DAWIA LEVEL III
READING LIST		REIMER LIBRARY/ACCP/SMARTBOOK	REIMER LIBRARY/ACCP/SMARTBOOK	REIMER LIBRARY/ACCP

As cited above, the career development track for officer's in Army contracting follows a path from functional experience, to broadening experience, up to strategic experience. This career path is not so different from the Air Force model previously discussed whose career development track is titled tactical, operational, and strategic. Both the Army and Air Force have built in a strategic level of contracting into their career paths to maintain proponency and functional advocacy for their contracting communities at the senior officer level of their service component. As previously mentioned, the Marine Corps does not possess a strategic level career path for contracting as the current senior ranking CCF officer is a lieutenant colonel, although structure exists for a single O-6, Colonel billet.

d. Commissioned Officers in Navy Contracting

Naval officers that work in the contracting field come from the Navy Supply Corps or the Civil and Engineering Corps. Officers entering the field from the Supply Corps are geared towards contracting for supplies and services as opposed to construction contracting which is a specialty of the Civil and Engineering Corps. The focus of this research is on those naval officers that enter the contracting field through the Supply Corps, as this focus area more closely resembles contracting in the Marine Corps and the models previously discussed for the Air Force and Army.

Naval officers interested in pursuing a career path in contracting are encouraged to complete the required DAU training classes while still serving in a Supply Corps billet. The *Navy Supply Corps Playbook* states the following:

A junior officer's exposure to contracts will extend throughout their career regardless of the subspecialty they choose. For those seeking to become experts in contracting, a clearly defined series of milestones are fundamental to achieving required Defense Acquisition Workforce [certification]. Ensigns through Lieutenants should seek DAWIA Contracting Level II certification when possible. (DON, 2011)

Interested officers can apply to enter a Navy internship program for contracting at the grade of O-2 and O-3 under the Navy Acquisition Contracting Officer internship program following their initial sea duty. Once these naval officers are accepted into the internship program they have two years to complete their DAWIA level II training courses via DAU courses taken online and through resident classes. These officers will work OJT at an installation or systems contracting activity such as a Fleet Logistics Center, Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), or Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR) gaining exposure to a variety of contracting functions ranging from contract solicitation, negotiation, and award. The ultimate goal of naval officers interested in pursuing a career path in contracting is to enter the Navy Acquisition Corps.

The Navy Acquisition Corps is the career path for officers to gain contracting experience across a variety of disciplines, and it is the pathway to support MDAPs similar to the Air Force protocols for intermediate level contracting experience previously discussed. The procedure for entering the acquisition workforce follows an

annual selection board process. According to the *Navy Supply Corps Playbook* section titled *It's Your Board*,

After completing at least Level II certification in a career field and meeting the four-year experience requirement, you are ready to apply for Acquisition Corps membership through the annual selection board process, which convenes each October to select officers into the Corps. Many Navy officer communities are eligible to join the Acquisition Corps. A NAVADMIN is released announcing the board which details the specifics of the application process. (DON, 2011)

Table 8 lists a possible career path for Naval Officers to gain PMOS experience coupled with Acquisition experience to enter the Navy Acquisition Corps.

Table 8. Navy Contracting Officer Career Path.
Source: Secretary of the Navy (2016b).

Years	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
CEC 5100	Co Cmdr Operational	Train/ Dev	FE & Acq Shore DH Tour			Staff FE Mgmt		Ops/XO Operational		FE & Acq Install Lvl (Indep)			Ops/CO Operational		Ops/XO Facilities Eng & Acq (Region)			CMD FE Acq & Des		Maj CMD FE & Acq			
AVIATION URL 1310/1320	1 st Sea	Shore TPS-VX/ JPME / NPS			2 nd Sea		Shore / Sea DH			VX, IPTL, APMSE			CMD XO/CO		ACAT I/II IPTL or DPM			MPM, Comp Lead, FRC CO DCMA CO, Test Wing CO					
AEDO 1510	1 st Sea	Shore TPS-VX/ JPME / NPS			2 nd Sea		IPTL, APMSE, FRC/DCMA Prod, VX DH/PC, TYCOM Class Desk			ACAT VII DPM or IPTL, ACAT I APMSE FRC Prod. Off, O-5 DCMA CO, VX CQC TP			MPM, Comp Lead, FRC CO DCMA CO, Test Wing CO										
AMDO 1520	Sea (CVN or L-boat AIMD) rotated with Shore (FRC, NATEC, TYCOM Class Desk, OPNAV, NAVAIR Staff or APML)						CVN AIMD/FRC O-5 CMD Equiv			ACAT VII DPM, IPTL, or APML, O-5 Acq Shore Cmd, NAVAIR Staff			MPM, Comp Lead, FRC CO DCMA CO, Major Staff										
SWO URL 1110	Sea Eng/NAV/Weapon Dept Head (2 Tours)			Shore Tour		1 st Acq Cmd Assignment		Ship XO/CO Command			2 nd Acq Cmd Tour		ACAT III/VPM		ACAT II/IMPM								
SUB URL 1120	Sea Eng/NAV/Weap, Dept Head			Fit Spt TYCOM		Sea XO-SM		Shore FLT / TYCOM		Submarine Command		Post CMD		Acq or Program Office		Major Acq Program							
EDO (surf/sub) 1440	EDO Quals	Shore S/Y, SOS, Acq Ofc			Shore (NSY,SOS,PMS,Field,HQ Acq) Sea (CSO,ENG,RO)			Shore Ind Activity, DH SYSCOM, ASN/OPNAV			Maj Acq CMD MPM S/Y CDR, SOS CO												
Supply Corps 3100	2nd Op Tour / Supply Dept			Post grad Sch.		Acq SubSpec Development		Sea/Overseas or Joint Acq		CONUS Acq Staff		CDR Sea		CMD or Acq Staff		CMD or HSC Dep CDR							
Years	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
LT or Capt (O-3)				LCDR or Major (O-4)				CDR or LCol (O-5)				CAPT or Col (O-6)				O-7							
<div><div></div>Fleet Experience<div></div>Acquisition Experience</div>																							

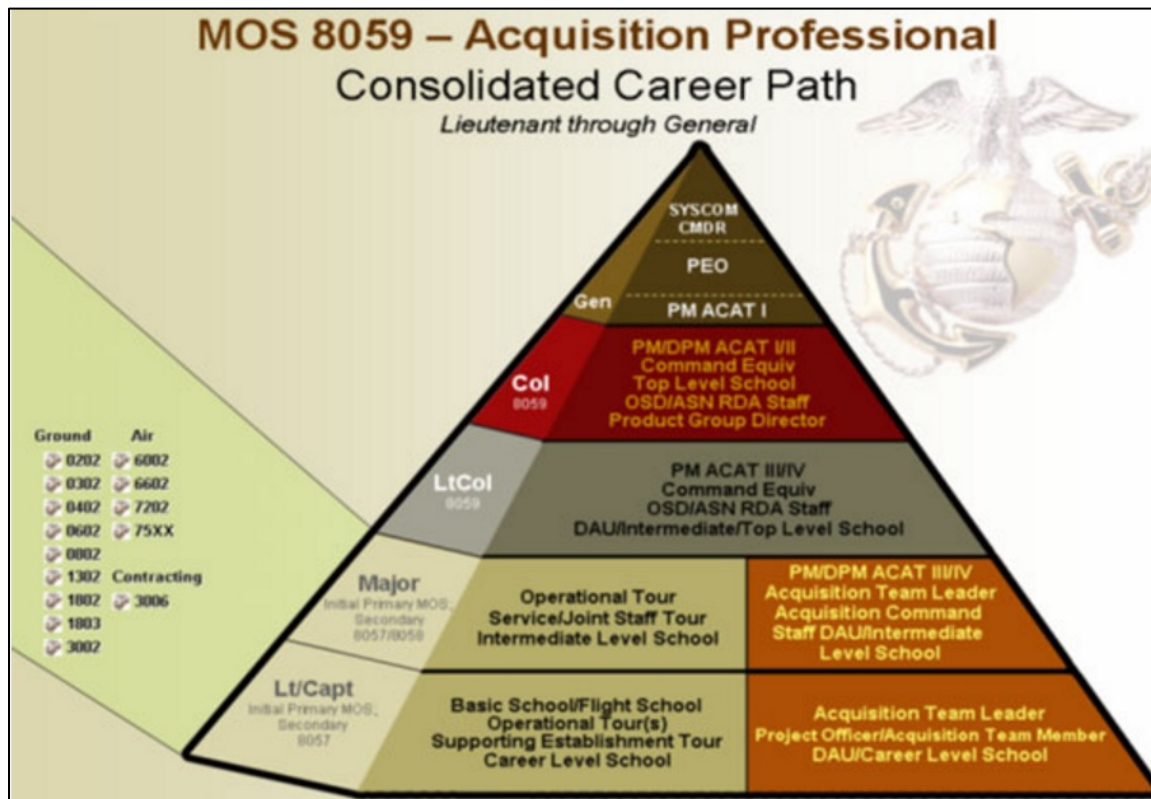
Similar to the established protocols for Marine Corps officers, naval officers serving in contracting are transient in nature. An officer in the Supply Corps will often bounce between a billet in the Supply Corps and a billet in the Acquisition Corps at their normal rotation time. These officers are expected to maintain their PMOS proficiency

and contracting proficiency similar to officers serving in the Marine Corps contracting community.

The protocols governing the entrance criteria into the contracting field for naval officers most closely resembles the established Marine Corps protocols since both services seek second tour officers; however, the training and development to groom these officers into successful contributors in the contracting workforce is in stark contrast. The Navy offers an internship program for its officers to enter the contracting field at an installation type contracting activity, working through an OJT period while simultaneously completing DAU training classes at the grades of O-2 and O-3. In comparison, the Marine Corps assigns its officers to a 18–24 month graduate program at NPS to earn DAU equivalencies up to DAWIA level III and upon graduation these officers are then assigned to an installation type contracting activity for a one year period of OJT.

The Navy offers an acquisition career path in the contracting discipline that is not currently established in the Marine Corps. The current Marine Corps acquisition career path is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Marine Corps Acquisition Career Path.
Source: Secretary of the Navy (2016a).



The 8059, Aviation Acquisition Management Professional (DON, 2015a) is a PMOS for Marine officers, as modeled in the Acquisition Professional Consolidated Career Path in Figure 3. Entrance into the 8059 PMOS (or 8061 PMOS, Ground Acquisition Management Professional (DON, 2015a))) is a permanent transition as opposed to the 3006 AMOS that is transient in nature. Marine officers entering a career in acquisitions are unlikely to return to the CCF since their career in acquisitions will take priority to the AMOS of 3006. In Comparison, naval officers can pursue an acquisition career path in the contracting discipline and continue to perform contracting functions. Similar protocols are established for the Air Force and Army contracting communities that have built in MDAP contracting support within the career roadmaps for officers serving in contracting.

3. Platforms

KOs are required to learn a myriad of electronic systems to perform their duties. As existing legacy systems make efforts to remain relevant by upgrading system operations and increasing efficiencies, new systems are created in an attempt to modernize and replace legacy systems. The result is a fluid environment where processes on existing platforms change continuously and the existing platforms are always on the brink of replacement. This fluidity requires regular training and instruction in order to maintain proficiency and incorporate software and platform changes into standard operating procedures. An officer's absence from the contracting field may require learning an entire new suite of systems, and their interfaces, from what was originally learned during their first tour. Both the DOD and the Marine Corps have programs in place to ensure that Marines in contracting billets are accurately trained on a platform's usage; however, neither program provides a solution to counter skills atrophy when Marines are serving in their PMOS.

a. System Access and Required Proficiency

For the purpose of analysis, this report separates platforms as procurements systems and support systems. Procurement systems are those that generate Standard Form (SF)1449 or SF44 contracting documents. The SF1449 is the document used to generate uniform contract format for establishing government contracts with vendors above the micro-purchase threshold. SF44s are used to write contracts under the micro-purchase threshold. For the purpose of this analysis procurement systems include Procurement Desktop-Defense (PD2), Contingency PD2, 3 in 1 tool, and oContrax. Support systems are those that do not generate contracts, but still play a vital role in the procurement process, they include Invoice, Receipt, Acceptance, and Property Transfer (iRAPT) and PR Builder. APEX will be addressed separately in this section as it is a planning system rather than a procurement or support system. This analysis will focus on the ease with which each system can be learned. A brief description of each system will be presented to aid the reader's understanding of the multitude of platforms that CCF officers must gain proficiency in to be an effective KO. This analysis focuses on the complexity of learning

and using each system. The narrow focus on each system should reveal the impact the systems have on transient officers and their knowledge base.

(1) Procurement Systems

Procurement systems in current use fall under the Standard Procurement System (SPS) architecture and include PD2 and Contingency PD2. Both systems are used across all services. Although not part of the SPS, the 3in1 Tool is an additional procurement system used by the DOD in place of the SF44, and is capable of interfacing with supporting systems. Additionally, the Marine Corps and Air Force are testing another procurement system called oContrax, which is currently under development and testing.

- PD2

All KOs must be proficient with using PD2 to effectively and efficiently execute their contracting duties, and continuous system updates demand the KO's attention to learn new system functionalities. PD2 is the software system of the SPS. It provides an enterprise-wide contracting software solution to the DOD assisting in all functions from defining requirements to contract closeout. The system incorporates both client/server and Web technologies. Client/server capabilities allow work load management, file sharing, and storage solutions to the local contracting activities. The Web technologies enables information interface with PR Builder, solicitation interface with Federal Business Opportunities (fedbizops.gov), and Contract Action Report (CAR) generation and release. Of note, the SPS provided a commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) software solution designed to replace over 70 legacy systems (CACI, 2011). PD2 is the system that sets the foundation for OJT, but despite the intent for PD2 to be a consolidated, intuitive system, incorporating the various complexities from so many legacy systems into a COTS system created a complex and complicated enterprise for users to manipulate. Learning to use PD2 requires a slow methodical approach to learning coupled with repetition to assist retention. Even experienced users find themselves seeking help or using a trial and error method of rediscovery when performing uncommon actions. PD2 also undergoes frequent updates to keep aligned with current acquisition regulations. Though most changes are in content rather than procedure, procedural changes often cause delays in certain steps of the contract development and management process.

PD2 carries a unique complication regarding user proficiency for Marines. Once removed from the installation contracting office, there is very little opportunity for the Marine to use the software. ECPs do not have contract authority in a garrison environment; therefore, they do not warrant PD2 access while in garrison. To provide PD2 access, the Marine Corps would have to obtain licenses for each system identified to carry the software at the ECP, and the ECP would have to have local servers installed for the client/server interface to function. Such an installation would carry an extremely high initial cost creating a server room, purchasing server hardware, and including installation costs. It would also create a perpetual licensing cost each year. The lack of system access amplifies the challenges in maintaining proficiency on a complex computer system. Once OJT is complete, the next time an officer will gain access to PD2 is not until they are deployed or on an exercise executing contracts as a warranted KO. The same is true for officers returning to contracting after a tour in their PMOS. In this situation, there is even more opportunity for error as the returning officer does not have the benefit of conducting OJT shortly before executing contracts, and no reintegration period of training exists for returning officers.

The most sensible solution to this capability gap is to increase the user's access to PD2 when not deployed. Even having scenario-based training software would allow Marines to train in the PD2 environment without the requirement of a local server, allowing users to maintain a level of proficiency outside of the installation contracting office. It would also enable activities to create a reintegration training for officers returning from tours within their PMOS using current simulations of PD2. The cost of this course of action is unknown due to the development costs associated with the training software and licensing or purchasing agreements that would accompany it; however, this is beyond the scope of this research to explore.

- Contingency PD2

Similar to PD2, all KOs must be proficient with using Contingency PD2 to effectively and efficiently execute their contracting duties. The Contingency PD2, also known as PD2 Standalone, is an offline version that provides all the PD2 contract writing features for use in an austere environment. The procedural concept is that a Marine, prior

to deploying, would have the PD2 Standalone system loaded onto a deployable computer and updated with all current regulations, including provisions and clauses. This provides the Marine with a familiar contract writing system from which to generate SF1449s. Contingency PD2's weakness is a lack of Web based interface like that used in PD2. Without this interface, there is no ability to pull data from the PR or to create or generate a CAR.

Familiarity with PD2 Standalone system functionality is limited to the user's previous experience with PD2. Familiarity is also influenced by the time spent away from the SE before deploying, which can be years for officers returning for a subsequent tour. Currently, in the newly established ECPs, PD2 Standalone has only been installed on a limited number of computer assets. PD2 Standalone does present an alternative course of action for overall SPS training and maintenance of skills proficiency; however due to high deployment tempos and limited computer resources the use of PD2 Standalone as a training option is not yet viable. Due to system update requirements and licensing rights, the cost of putting the system on ECP computers to be utilized for training is too costly. While the latest regulations may not be an absolute requirement for training purposes, the licensing costs for updates are charged per processor on each computer resulting in greater costs than the potential education benefit.

- 3in1 Tool

Marines assigned to joint contacting activities may use the 3in1 Tool to perform their contracting mission; therefore, they must be trained on its usage. The 3in1 Tool provides the KO with an alternative to utilizing paper SF44s for payments under the micro-purchase threshold. This can be particularly useful in an austere environment where weather can play a significant factor in operations. The 3in1 Tool is a portable, standalone device that enables data population into fields that mirror the SF44. On and off-line capabilities position the 3in1 Tool to serve as a complete replacement for paper SF44s. The 3in1 Tool is an example of a platform that is widely used throughout the DOD in a contingency or expeditionary environment, but is not currently used by the Marine Corps due to policy restrictions. Though the Marine Corps does not authorize the

3in1 Tool's use, Marines can expect to use it if serving in a contracting capacity under another service's contracting authority.

- oContrax

oContrax is an Internet-based system currently being field tested by KOs within I MEF as an alternative to Contingency PD2. oContrax serves as an example of the types of systems that are being introduced to the contracting field while Marine officers serve outside of the CCF. Systems such as oContrax must be learned by the officer upon their return to the CCF to effectively and efficiently perform a contracting mission. The Air Force was the first to look at the system as a possible alternative to using PD2 Standalone, and at the time of this research, the Air Force and Marine Corps are the only two services considering use of the system.

oContrax is presented as requiring no system specific training to be effectively utilized in a deployed environment. A system not requiring formalized training for successful operation would provide significant advantages in reducing learning curve reset over the complexities of using PD2 Standalone. Though oContrax is an Internet-based system, it does not synchronize with support systems. Additionally, the Internet connectivity requirement raises the question of its benefit in regard to deployable procurement systems. oContrax does not eliminate the requirement to learn complex SPS systems, rather it provides an efficient easy alternative when Internet connectivity exists. Beyond ease of use, there is no tangible benefit which oContrax provides not already provided by Contingency PD2.

(2) Support Systems

This research limits the discussion and analysis of support systems to iRAPT e-Business Suite applications and PR Builder. Though there are several more support systems, these are the two platforms that KOs are expected to maintain accounts with and access in contract execution. Additionally, customers are often required to learn a portion of the system's usage; this is the case with Marine Corps supply and comptroller shops and their customers.

- iRAPT

iRAPT is the post-award contract management tool that is mandated within the DOD, and all KOs must be familiar with its use. Becoming familiar with its use can be a daunting task because iRAPT includes an extensive suite of sub-systems as follows: myInvoice, Contracting Officer Representative Tool (CORT), Unique Identification Registry, Electronic Document Access (EDA), and Electronic Military Interdepartmental Purchase Request (eMIPR) (iRAPT Overview, n.d.). Though each tool within iRAPT has like roles and similar interface, the uses and function of each remains unique. As a support system, iRAPT access is not required to write contracts; however, contracting personnel must maintain high user proficiency to execute portions of their duties.

- PR Builder

In the performance of contracting duties, KOs must be able to lead their supported customers in the usage of PR Builder to input their requirements packages, linking the requirement with approved funding. The KO often serves as the connecting link between the customer and the comptroller for appropriate execution of government spending. PR Builder is an Internet-based platform that interfaces with PD2 and the Standard Accounting, Budgeting, and Reporting System (SABRS). In an operational environment, the KO screens customer PRs ensuring their customer clearly articulates their requirement. It is critical that the KO ensures the supported command understands the PR Builder interface due to its integral role in the contracting process; therefore, it is incumbent upon the KO to be fully proficient in PR Builder usage.

(3) APEX

Experienced, well-qualified CCF officers are required to provide OCS advisement to the GCC in support of joint operation mission requirements. This advisement is conducted through the development of an Annex W inside of the APEX system that details the anticipated OCS plan for the GCC (CJCS, 2014). Due to this requirement, 3006s must maintain a certain level of understanding to effectively and efficiently provide OCS functions to the supported GCC. The majority of CCF actions are outside of joint operations; however, the MARFOR or MEF billets have a high potential to support

joint operations. Table 2 reflects one vacant MARFOR billet, one vacant MEF billet, and one MEF billet filled by a captain; therefore, it is a realistic consideration that inexperienced CCF officers may be called upon to perform in a joint capacity. The current understaffing in the CCF requires all 3006 Marines to have a heightened understanding of the APEX system. The current entry level training structure for 3006 Marines is centered on the tactical level of contract administration and gives little attention to strategic operational planning. This gap in training, coupled with officer shortfalls, suggests that the current CCF officer corps capabilities do not possess adequate experience and training to support the GCC in OCS functions in joint operation environments.

(4) Platforms Implications on the CCF Officer Corps

Learning the multitude of procurement and support systems proves challenging for officers entering the contracting field. Removing the officer from the field in order to perform in their PMOS creates a requirement for the officer to re-familiarize themselves with the previously learned systems, and all new updates. The level of difficulty in relearning platforms when returning to contracting for subsequent tours is dependent on the intuitiveness of the platform. The burden of relearning systems becomes moot if CCF officers were permanently assigned to the MOS. The only remaining challenge would be to maintain proficiency with updates and changes as they take place. An alternate course of action other than making 3006 a PMOS is to create a requirement for officers possessing the 3006 AMOS to maintain proficiency on contracting systems while not assigned to contracting billets. Analyzing the CLP and training and readiness standards programs should help to determine the feasibility of incorporating a mandate to maintain system proficiency while 3006 Marines are serving in their PMOS.

b. Continuous Learning Points to Maintain Certification Levels

This section reviews the DOD CLP program to determine the impact on the CCF officer corps when 3006s are serving outside of CCF billets. DAWIA was enacted by Public Law 101-510 in 1990 as a means of improving the acquisition workforce. Once enacted, DAWIA established the DAU (Rendon & Snider, 2008, p. 269). The DAU's

mission is to “provide a global learning environment to develop qualified acquisition, requirements and contingency professionals who deliver and sustain effective affordable warfighting capabilities (About DAU, n.d., p. 1).” The OUSD AT&L issued *Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 5000.66*, implementing the AT&L Workforce Education, Training, and Career Development Program. As such, the DoDI establishes the authority and responsibility of the acquisition workforce. It also established education requirements as they apply to certification. Part of the established education requirement for all AT&L workforce members is to maintain 80 CLPs every two years with a goal of 40 CLPs every fiscal year (DOD, 2005). DAU is the primary vehicle that provides guidance and opportunity for CLPs. CLPs can be earned through four mediums: training activities, educational activities, experience, and professional activities (Continuous Learning Center, n.d.). The subjects studied while earning CLPs are at the discretion of the AT&L worker or unit policy. As previously discussed, the draft MCO directs CCF Officers to rotate between 3006 and 3002 billet assignments (DON, in press). Currently there is no order or policy mandating that officers maintain CLP levels when not assigned to AT&L positions (CCF billets). AT&L regulations and policy are normally in flux making it difficult to stay abreast of current practices despite the CLP requirement. This challenge is amplified when removing an officer from the contracting field for periods three years or longer. With no requirement or incentive for CCF officers to maintain CLP levels while not in CCF billets, an even greater learning curve reset is created.

As validated by the survey data, there is currently no reintegration process for returning CCF Officers. This imposes great pressure on 3006s to obtain the CLPs as swiftly as possible to either deploy or fully act in their billet capacity. Such pressure directs the CCF officer’s focus toward becoming qualified instead of re-familiarizing themselves with the field and learning the new regulations, systems, and procedures put in place in their absence. CLPs are not sufficient and specific enough for the returning officer to regain the proficiency required to perform their billet. There are two potential courses of action that may mitigate the knowledge atrophy: 1) setting a CLP requirement for CCF Officers while they are serving outside the AT&L community; and 2) making the 3006 a permanent MOS. Making a requirement for maintaining CLPs while operating

outside of AT&L billets will help CCF Officers maintain a level of proficiency while serving in PMOS billets. In order for this to be effective though, greater guidance would have to be provided so that the CLP training was specifically targeted toward reducing skill atrophy and keeping the officer abreast of current policy and regulation change. Training focused on maintaining proficiency could be selected by HQMC, LPC from existing DAU courses. Additionally, regulation and policy training would have to be developed and mandated by HQMC, LPC. Despite the potential effectiveness of this training, there is no true enforcement mechanism unless training completion is required as a documented part of an officer's performance evaluation while serving in their PMOS billet. This enforcement would be highly unlikely, as the officer is serving other command requirements in their PMOS that will take precedence over their 3006 AMOS background, especially considering they may never return to contracting. As another potential recommendation, making CCF officers a PMOS would eliminate the need for any new training development beyond the current CLP program.

c. Training and Readiness Events to Maintain Fully Trained Marines

The systems approach to training (SAT) provides a six-phase structure for the Marine Corps to ensure Marines receive the proper training for their rank and billet, they receive the training at sufficient intervals, and they demonstrate skill mastery before advancing in task difficulty. Tasks are identified as either individual skills or collective skills; collective skills being those performed as a team such as a squad or platoon (DON, 2010). As part of the SAT process, the Marine Corps publishes T&R Manuals for all MOSs. T&R standards for contracting Marines are found in the *Ground Supply T&R Manual*, NAVMC 3500.64B. The Contracting coded tasks include 14 individual tasks (see Table 9) divided into five functional/duty areas: Advanced Contracting Specialist (ADV), Contracting Specialist (COS), Expeditionary (EXPD), Intermediate Contracting Specialist (ICOS), and Management (MNMT) (DON, 2014).

Table 9. Index of Individual Events.
Source: NAVMC 3500.64B, p. 6-3.

EVENT CODE	EVENT	PAGE
2000-LEVEL		
CONT-ADV-2001	Supervise Contingency Contract Specialist	6-3
CONT-ADV-2002	Supervise contract operations	6-3
CONT-ADV-2003	Conduct contracting operations integration	6-4
CONT-ADV-2004	Administer Field Ordering Officer (FOO) Program	6-4
CONT-ADV-2005	Perform Acquisition procedures	6-5
CONT-ADV-2006	Prepare Unauthorized Commitment Packages	6-6
CONT-COS-2001	Conduct pre-solicitation actions	6-6
CONT-COS-2002	Conduct post solicitation actions	6-7
CONT-COS-2003	Conduct pre-award actions	6-8
CONT-COS-2004	Conduct post award actions	6-8
CONT-EXPD-2001	Perform expeditionary contracting duties	6-9
CONT-ICOS-2001	Perform Acquisition procedures	6-10
CONT-ICOS-2002	Prepare Unauthorized Commitment Packages	6-10
CONT-MNMT-2001	Manage contracting operations	6-11

Unlike T&R events for most MOSs, many of the individual events for contracting are ambiguous. The individual events avoid specifying the automated system to use and the amount of the dollar threshold to operate within. This ambiguity allows for changes to occur within contracting regulations and requirements without having to edit the *Ground Supply T&R Manual* as well. Rather than requiring experience in specific FAR Parts, the T&R uses the words “when applicable.” As contracting requirements are created from the needs of the customers, and each have their own unique circumstances; therefore, by not requiring T&R standard performance within a specific FAR Part, the CCF Marine is not pressured into using a specific FAR Part that would not be the best choice for procurement of the requirement.

The ambiguity of the T&R Manual also carries negative consequences. Figure 4 depicts individual event CONT-ADV-2001. The first notable discrepancy is the event code. Most MOS event codes are directed at specific billets such as a basic rifleman. There is not a T/O billet for Advance Contracting Specialists in the CCF; therefore, aside from rank, there is no means for the Marine to determine if the training event applies to them. Secondly, the actual performance steps are overly vague, describing basic responsibilities of any contracting supervisor rather than being reserved as an advanced responsibility. To further articulate this point, notice the grades range from staff sergeant

through lieutenant colonel. This suggests the only grade exempt from Advanced Contracting Specialist requirements is sergeant, the lowest entry grade allowed into the CCF. Further ambiguity exists in the event titles themselves. Both of the event titles for the Intermediate Contracting Specialist are also found within the Advanced Contracting Specialist events; however, the conditions and performance steps are different and reflect a natural progression in contracting knowledge and responsibility. These disparities do not suggest that the T&R program is inapplicable to Marines in contracting, rather they suggest that the current T&R standards for Marines in contracting should be rewritten and updated to be billet specific and reflect the changes enacted by the draft order when it goes into effect.

Figure 4. Individual Standard CONT-ADV-2001.
Source: NAVMC 3500.64B, p. 6-9.

<u>CONT-ADV-2001:</u> Supervise Contingency Contract Specialist	
<u>EVALUATION-CODED:</u> NO	<u>SUSTAINMENT INTERVAL:</u> 24 months
<u>MOS PERFORMING:</u> 3006, 3044	
<u>GRADES:</u> SSGT, GYSGT, MSGT, MGYSGT, CAPT, MAJ, LTCOL	
<u>INITIAL TRAINING SETTING:</u> MOJT	
<u>CONDITION:</u> Given table of organization, mission requirement, and automated system.	
<u>STANDARD:</u> To ensure contract procedures are adhered IAW laws and regulations.	
<u>PERFORMANCE STEPS:</u>	
1. Assign task(s).	
2. Review final documents.	
3. Enforce plans, policies and procedures.	
<u>REFERENCES:</u>	
1. DFARS Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement	
2. FAR Federal Acquisition Regulation	
3. MAPS Marine Corps Acquisition Procedures Supplement	
4. NMCARS Navy Marine Corps Acquisition Regulation Supplement	

The challenge of enforcing the CLP requirement among 3006s serving in their PMOS also exists regarding T&R standards. Not only would it be unrealistic to require 3006s to perform contracting T&R standards while serving in their PMOS, it is counter to the T&R program. Billet specific T&R standards are written as such because they are only required for those billet holders to complete; therefore, a 3006 would not expect to be evaluated on the contracting T&R standards while in their PMOS.

This analysis reveals contracting T&R standards as vague and unenforceable. To resolve the ambiguity, such standards must be rewritten as billet-specific standards that incorporate changes from the draft order. Regarding enforceability, there is no apparent means to require 3006s to maintain and perform T&R standards while serving in their PMOS. The only potential resolution appears to be creating a 3006 PMOS.

E. CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter V analyzed problems within the 3006 MOS by transitioning from a macro to a micro perspective. At the macro level, it assessed the relationship between DOD contingency contracting and the CCF's critical vulnerabilities. The data analyzed revealed that the CCF is currently experiencing several of the challenges present within DOD contingency contracting. Despite similarities, the DOD IG recommendations for DOD contingency contracting operations did not appear to be appropriate for CCF inclusion as they were not linked to defined critical vulnerabilities identified in this research. An analysis of the 3006 T/O was conducted to assess the health of the overall force and reveal underlying causes to critical vulnerabilities. The analysis not only revealed the Marine Corps' inability to adequately staff billets, but it also highlighted the experience gap present by filling field grade billets with entry-level officers. Billet vacancies caused entry-level officers to staff senior billets and key leadership billets left vacant. The survey results were then analyzed to reveal Marine Corps contracting leadership's perception of transient 3006s and identify potential courses of action that may address the vulnerabilities. Finally, the TIPS Model was utilized to assess the health of the CCF. Analysis of the personnel pillar revealed numerous gaps in mission readiness caused by inadequate structure and policy. Protocol pillar analysis compared the Marine

Corps contracting program with adjacent services to identify potential models that could be incorporated into the Marine Corps. The platform pillar analysis revealed the plethora of contracting system knowledge requirements and that the mechanisms in place to maintain proficiency in contracting are not enforceable when a 3006 Marine returns to their PMOS.

The combined discussions and analysis has identified multiple gaps in capability that cannot be filled through any one specific course of action. The next chapter reveals the researches recommendations and conclusions that address the CCF's critical vulnerabilities discovered herein.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of this report presents the top five recommendations for the Marine Corps CCF obtained from completing the research objective. Each recommendation includes a justification paragraph that documents the perceived benefit to the Marine Corps CCF from implementing the proposed change. The overarching goal of all recommendations is to establish a more effective contracting workforce to better enable the CCF to efficiently execute mission requirements. After the top five recommendations of the report are presented, two areas of future research are presented in the section that follows. These two areas of future research potentially have significant impacts on the CCF's ability to efficiently execute its mission, but investigation of these two areas is beyond the scope of this research. Finally, this chapter concludes with a brief review of the research objective and the methodology utilized to complete this research.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

The research conducted in furtherance of the objective yielded five recommendations regarding the employment of officers in the CCF. These recommendations were introduced as potential considerations within the data and discussions and analysis portions of this research, and they are formalized in this chapter. The top five recommendations resulting from this research are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Research Recommendations

1. Create a Shortened Entry-Level Training Program For Officers – Not an 18–24 Month Master’s Degree Program.
2. Reserve the NPS Contracting Program for Field Grade Officers Returning for a Subsequent 3006 Tour.
3. Make Contracting a PMOS for Second Tour Field Grade Officers, Linking this Milestone to a Formal 3006 Career Progression Roadmap, and Allow Other MOS Communities to Enter the CCF.
4. Adopt a Deputy to Head of Contingency Contracting as an O-6 or O-7 Billet to be Filled by a 3006.
5. Establish a Reintegration Training Period for Officers Returning to Contracting for Subsequent Tours.

1. Create a Shortened Entry-Level Training Program For Officers—Not an 18- to 24-Month Master’s Degree Program

The primary research objective of identifying potential critical vulnerabilities to the CCF officer corps brought to light the excessive and inappropriate entry level training program for new CCF officers. NPS provides an excellent opportunity for Marine officers to advance their careers by obtaining graduate degrees in highly specialized fields; however, for those officers just entering the CCF, an 18–24 month NPS program greatly delays their first exposure to touching a contract action. The NPS resident program removes any chance for entry-level officers to gain relevant hands-on experience managing contracts until they arrive at their first RCO to initiate OJT. Additionally, much of the material instructed at NPS is catered to MDAPs, which has little relevance in Marine Corps field, contingency contracting activities. For example, nearly all contract actions at RCOs and in support of forward deployed Marines utilize simplified acquisition procedures for procurement of commercial item solutions, and the vast majority of those actions are under the simplified acquisition threshold.

The NPS curriculum for contract management provides the fundamental concepts behind the theoretical framework for contracting with particular emphasis on contracting for commercial items; however, the NPS curriculum lacks the specific procedural instructions to guide a new officer in awarding contracts. This gap in training at NPS exists because the program is targeted at Contracting Series, General Schedule-1102s who have already completed DAWIA Level I contracting certification requirements. Based on the lack of procedural instruction, a recommendation is for the Marine Corps to establish a shortened entry-level training school for officers that focuses on DAU Level I competencies similar to the Air Force and Army 4–6 week introductory training period followed by immediate assignment to a field contracting activity. This model would immerse the officer in a contracting environment at a far more rapid tempo compared to the NPS program, benefiting both the individual officer and the Marine Corps through increased gains in experience and immediate increases to manpower strength yielding improved contract action completion rates.

2. Reserve the NPS Contracting Program for Field Grade Officers Returning for a Subsequent 3006 Tour

The three focus areas of this report’s research objective included training, career path, and manpower shortfalls. This second recommendation offers a direct means of addressing the training and career path critical vulnerabilities identified in this report, and if implemented in conjunction with the third recommendation will greatly reduce manpower shortfalls. The recommendation to reserve the NPS contracting program for field grade officers returning for a subsequent tour further cements a career progression roadmap for 3006s, incentivizing field grade officers to grow in the field, and it enables a segment of the 3006 community to focus on contracting at the operational and strategic levels.

The Marine Corps should reserve the NPS contracting program for field grade officers focused on the operational and strategic levels of contracting. The NPS contract management curriculum teaches skills directly relevant to operational and strategic level OCS functions in contrast to the entry-level skills associated to awarding contracts previously discussed. These operational and strategic level contracting skills are geared

toward placing an officer on a GCC's staff to provide OCS functions over the range of military operations in joint environments. These skills include policy management, establishing annexes for operational orders, and staffing acquisition requirements for contract execution in the GCC's AOR. The staff equivalencies executing these functional area responsibilities are predominately populated by field grade officers. For this reason, the NPS contracting curriculum is better suited towards field grade officers preparing to serve in OCS advisory billets as a pathway into the operational and strategic levels of contracting. Also, offering NPS to field grade officers would further incentivize officers to return for a subsequent 3006 tour.

This recommendation for field grade NPS attendance further supports the third recommendation of this research, which focuses on establishing a PMOS for officers returning for a second tour in contracting and linking this procedure into an overall career progression roadmap for CCF officers. The third recommendation also suggests considerations for appropriate feeder MOSs into the field of contracting.

3. Make Contracting a PMOS for Second Tour Field Grade Officers, Linking this Milestone to a Formal 3006 Career Progression Roadmap, and Allow Other MOS Communities to Enter the CCF

The central focus of this research involves restoring the health of the CCF officer corps. Significant field grade manpower shortfalls is arguably the single greatest problem area that currently plagues the CCF. Transitioning the 3006 field grade community to a PMOS would take significant strides to correct the inadequate field grade staffing. The Marine Corps will improve the quality and efficiency of contracting by making 3006 a PMOS for second tour officers. If the Marine Corps implemented this recommendation in conjunction with the previous two recommendations the health of the CCF field grade officer corps would be greatly improved. The CCF community has also expressed their desire to seek 3006 as a PMOS as documented in the survey results.

From the data gathered in survey responses addressed in Chapter IV of this report, officer manpower shortfalls is easily the highest ranked critical vulnerability to the CCF, selected unanimously by all 21 survey participants. Additionally, 76 percent of survey participants found that impermanent officer assignment was another critical vulnerability

that affected mission readiness for contracting. This data supports the conclusion that impermanent officer assignment impairs the Marine Corps' ability to efficiently perform its CCF mission. The unanimous survey response also supports this recommendation as there appears to be community interest in pursuing a permanent structure for officers in contracting. Additionally, several comments from senior members of the CCF share in this sentiment as expressed in remarks such as, "Bottom line: if the MC wants to really get serious about this career field, it needs a PMOS."

This research has determined the most effective method of establishing a PMOS in the CCF community is to introduce the PMOS lateral move option during an officer's second tour in contracting. The research has also determined that entry-level officers are not appropriate for assignment to a 3006 PMOS because these officers need to demonstrate their aptitude and proficiency in contracting during their first tour. Despite this recommendation, the Marine Corps does not currently define an established career path for 3006s to shape their career progression; therefore, establishing a career progression roadmap would clearly define when a 3006 PMOS lateral move would occur in an officer's career. An established career path would also serve to greatly improve the overall strength of the CCF officer corps by ensuring officers are assigned to appropriate billets at the right timing in their career progression.

CCF officers would benefit significantly from a career progression roadmap similar to the Air Force model discussed in Chapter V that defines contracting experience and proficiency into tactical, operational, and strategic levels. The Air Force career progression model defines contracting at the tactical level as approximately 0–10 years of contracting experience, the operational level as approximately 10–20 years of contracting experience, and the strategic level as approximately 20 plus years of contracting experience. Using the Air Force model as a foundation, this research adopts their three levels of contracting experience into a proposed 3006 career progression roadmap as proposed in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Proposed CCF Officer Career Progression Roadmap

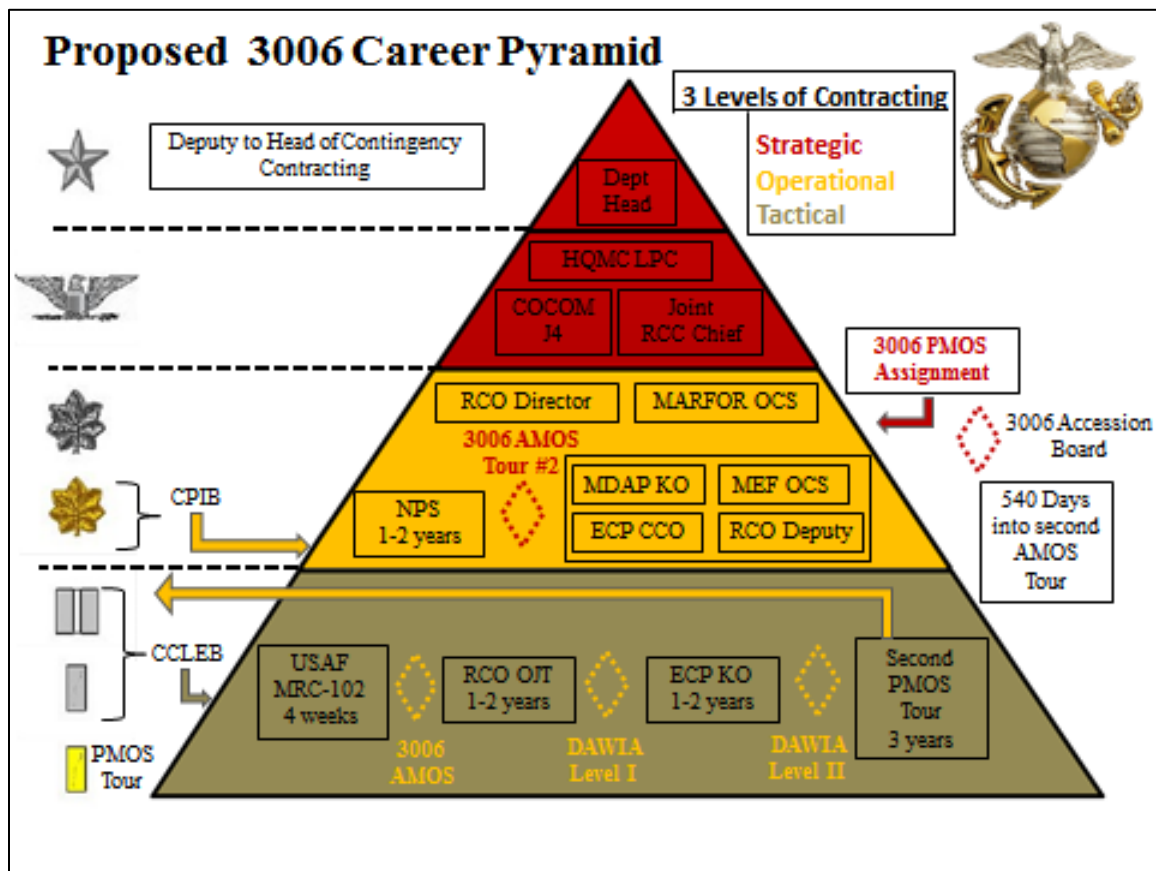


Figure 5 details the career path for Marine officers in the CCF as they progress through the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of contracting. Progressing chronologically through the chart, the potential 3006 officer will be selected to enter into the CCF on the CCLEB following completion of a successful PMOS tour and career designation. This research recommends that upon CCLEB selection the officer is sent to the Air Force's four-week Mission Ready Contracting Officer (MRC-102) Course for training and assignment in support of tactical level contracting. MRC-102 will provide the officer the fundamental knowledge to work in an entry-level contracting position, and the officer attains the 3006 AMOS designation. Upon MRC-102 graduation the research recommends assigning the newly qualified 3006 officer to a RCO for a one to two year OJT period. Upon demonstrating OJT competency and meeting IDP milestones the officer will be assigned to an ECP to support contingency contracting deployments,

operating at the tactical level. Upon completion of their first tour in the CCF the officer will return back to their PMOS.

During the officer's second tour in their PMOS, officers possessing the 3006 AMOS will be screened on the Commandant's Professional Intermediate-Level Education Board (CPIB) for formal education attendance under the SEP. This research recommends that CPIB board members review the tactical level contracting proficiency of each field grade officer possessing the 3006 AMOS, determining the most appropriate officers for selection to attend the NPS contract management curriculum. The NPS curriculum will effectively introduce selected officers to the operational and strategic levels of contracting. Upon NPS graduation, the field grade officer can be assigned to an ECP CCO billet; MEF or MARFOR OCS advisory billet; or to serve in an MDAP contracting office. During this assignment the officer will be evaluated for contracting proficiency at the operational and strategic levels. It is recommended that once each officer obtains 540 days of observed evaluation time in their second 3006 tour they become eligible for a 3006 PMOS lateral move. HQMC will conduct an annual screening and assessment board to select 3006 PMOS officers. Those officers wishing to be removed from consideration must notify HQMC prior to the annual accession board, and removal from consideration will be based on needs of the Marine Corps. Lateral move applications will be screened based upon the officer's performance thus far when executing CCF billets, in addition to their performance while serving in their PMOS. Once designated a 3006 PMOS, the field grade officer is now a permanent member of the CCF and will no longer return back to tours in their former PMOS. With the 3006 PMOS, the officer is now eligible to serve in billets as an RCO Director; joint contracting tour billets; or to serve in a contracting office under a MDAP within the DOD. Serving as a contracting officer under a MDAP capitalizes on the Marine Corps' intent to use the NPS education path to train CCF officers, since the NPS curriculum is heavily focused on contract actions associated to MDAPs. From this point on in an officer's career in the CCF, the officer is available to serve in operational and strategic contracting level billets throughout the Marine Corps, with the potential to promote to the rank of Colonel or

Brigadier General serving in the Deputy to Head of Contingency Contracting billet which is presented in recommendation four.

It is also important to note, by restricting entrance criteria eligibility to only supply officers the Marine Corps has limited the opportunities to obtain well-qualified officers from other MOSs that could provide valuable experience inputs to the CCF. Regardless if 3006 remains a PMOS or AMOS, the Marine Corps would benefit from introducing outside MOS communities other than supply into the CCF. Supply officers are prime candidates for contracting accession; however, supply is only one function in a much larger model that governs the contracting process. KOs also work closely with the finance and logistics communities to ensure the proper execution and expenditure of appropriated funds. The accession pipeline should be reopened to MOSs other than supply.

Establishing a PMOS for officers returning for a second tour will serve to mitigate field grade manpower shortfalls, and increase the health of the CCF officer corps. Furthermore, a formal career progression roadmap will benefit the CCF through the retention of experienced, well-qualified officers, and also benefit the individual officer by defining clear milestones for them to grow in the ranks of the CCF officer corps. Opening entrance into the CCF to additional MOSs will expand the breadth of knowledge and experience within the CCF, enabling efficiencies in CCF mission accomplishment. Ultimately, this recommendation increases career growth opportunities for officers that desire to serve in the CCF.

4. Adopt a Deputy to Head of Contingency Contracting as an O-6 or O-7 Billet to be Filled by a 3006

The primary research objective involves defining a link to the critical vulnerabilities that affect the CCF's capability to efficiently execute its mission. As previously discussed, a lack of senior field grade officers in the CCF is arguably the single greatest problem area that currently plagues the CCF. One possible reason for a lack of field grade officer retention in the CCF is the limited opportunity for advancement within the 3006 community.

Under the current structure, no billets exist for an officer beyond the grade of O-5, thus an officer that is pursuing a career in the CCF has reached their terminal rank at this point in their career progression. The lack of advancement could serve as a method of dis-incentivizing well-qualified officers from entering or returning to the CCF. The lack of a senior billet also precludes CCF functional advocacy on Marine Corps' Operational Advisory Groups and executive seminars where decisions are made that affect the overall force structure. Having a senior voice, that understands contracting, to represent the CCF at these working groups is of paramount importance to safeguard community interests and achieve the most effective and efficient use of CCF resources. Congress has realized the importance of ensuring a senior voice represents contracting interests by directing the DOD to assign a senior commissioned officer with contracting experience to each GCC.

The John Warner National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2007 mandated "The assignment of a senior commissioned officer with appropriate acquisition experience and qualifications to act as head of contingency contracting during combat operations, post-conflict operations, and contingency operations, who shall report directly to the commander of the combatant command in whose area of responsibility the operations occur" (Pub. L. 109-364, 2006, sec. 854). Based on this requirement, it is recommended the Marine Corps adopts a Deputy to Head of Contingency Contracting as a Colonel or Brigadier General billet, to be filled by a 3006. A senior commissioned officer, by law, is supposed to act as head of contingency contracting, which would justify the need for each service component to develop a deputy billet that serves to make liaison with the appointed head of contingency contracting with matters regarding the individual service components' employment of its CCF manpower. The establishment of such a billet within the T/O structure would create an opportunity that would incentivize officers to desire to grow and promote within billets in the CCF.

5. Establish a Reintegration Training Period for Officers Returning to Contracting for Subsequent Tours

This recommendation addresses the research objective as it pertains to skills atrophy caused by transient officers moving back and forth between CCF billets and their PMOS. If the Marine Corps does not implement the previously introduced

recommendations, a possible alternative solution is to establish reintegration training. The acquisitions field is a fluid, rapidly changing environment that demands regular training to remain abreast of current regulations. The analysis determined that current training requirements are insufficient to address the knowledge lost through skills atrophy, nor do they address new regulations that come into effect when the officer is serving back in their PMOS. Without specifying required course subjects for KOs to attend, DAWIA's CLP program lacks the focus required to reintegrate returning officers. These courses are designed for those currently working in the acquisition field, not for those returning to it after a three-year hiatus. Additionally, Marine Corps' T&R standards are vague and are designed to assess a KO's knowledge, not to systematically train Marines. There are two potential means of mitigating skills atrophy: 1) making 3006 a PMOS or 2) design and implement a reintegration training program inclusive of changes over a three-year span of time. Advocacy of a 3006 PMOS is identified as the most effective course of action as already detailed in recommendation three; therefore, this recommendation focuses on implementing a reintegration training program.

Although not the most effective course of action, establishing a reintegration training program is the most feasible course of action to mitigate the critical vulnerability of skills atrophy. The effectiveness of a reintegration training program for returning 3006s hinges upon the following three characteristics: the program must be incorporated agency-wide; the program must be established in policy by higher headquarters; and the curriculum must be centrally developed and managed to ensure that only up-to-date, relevant, and accurate information is included. HQMC LPC's mission "is to provide policy, guidance and oversight for all ground supply and maintenance matters; to provide policy, guidance and oversight for logistics training and education" (USMC, 2016a, p. 1). As such, HQMC LPC is already responsible for providing policy and training to the CCF. LPC's mission enables them to incorporate all three previously discussed characteristics needed for successful program implementation, making LPC the logical choice to implement a reintegration training program. Not only is LPC able to implement agency-wide policy and training, but they are also able to enforce the reintegration training program's execution. Furthermore, LPC's existing role enables them to maintain

awareness on policy changes and training deficiencies in the CCF allowing LPC to tailor the training so that it is up-to-date and relevant. This research recommendation does not define a specific method for reintegration training as this is beyond the scope of this research; however, it is believed that a comprehensive reintegration training program managed and maintained by LPC is the most feasible solution to address skills atrophy if the Marine Corps elects not to adopt this researches' previous recommendations.

B. AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

Completing the research objective of this paper has resulted in two problem areas for future research, as follows: 1) does the DOD have the right number of qualified members in the acquisition work force to manage the defense acquisition system, and 2) what is the impact of civilian manpower staffing efforts on the CCF's mission? These two areas of consideration are beyond the scope of this research which focused on the effects of the transient officer in the CCF; however, both topics have potentially significant impacts on the CCF's ability to efficiently execute its mission. This threat correlates to similar problems experienced in the civilian acquisition workforce within the DOD. Professors Rene Rendon and Keith Snider quote Senator Levin in their book *Management of Defense Acquisition Projects*, as saying, "The root cause of these and other problems in the defense acquisition system is our failure to maintain an acquisition work force with the resources and skills needed to manage the department's acquisition system" (2008, p. 268). This quote expresses the significance of conducting additional research in these problem areas since they may have significant impacts on CCF mission efficiency.

C. CONCLUSIONS

The results of this research effectively met the research objective. The objective of this research was to assess impacts of the CCF realignment relevant to the CCF officer corps, identifying potential critical vulnerabilities that exist under the new contracting structure employed by the Marine Corps, and to subsequently make recommendations for corrective actions to restore health to the CCF officer corps. The focus areas of interest were training, career path, and manpower deficiencies as there appears to be a link

between these areas of interest and an inability of the CCF to execute its mission efficiently.

This research has examined the effects of transient officers in the CCF on the Marine Corps' ability to effectively and efficiently provide contracting support to Marine Corps operations. This research effort began by defining the research objective, scope, and focus areas to assess the impacts of the CCF realignment on the CCF officer corps. Research included a comprehensive literature review of the directives, doctrine, and studies associated to CCF operations, implementation messages affecting the CCF realignment, and the draft MCO that governs CCF functions. Data was also accumulated from an analysis of the top five systemic contracting problem areas denoted by DOD IGO studies. This data helped to build a seven-question survey that was provided to the senior members of the CCF to better identify critical vulnerabilities and make recommendations for corrective actions.

All data was analyzed under the TIPS Model personnel, protocol, and platform pillars, focusing on the CCF officer corps and the link to the effects of transient officers on the CCF's ability to effectively and efficiently execute its mission. The personnel pillar analyzed the accession pipeline for the 3006 MOS to determine the current capability to meet operating force requirements. The protocol pillar analyzed the doctrine that establishes the entrance criteria for officers in the CCF within all service components and the impacts associated with transient officers serving in Marine Corps CCF billets. The platform pillar analyzed training requirements and technical proficiencies achieved by officers in a 3006 tour to determine the detriment to the CCF when transient officers are absent for three years or greater. Analysis under the TIPS model resulted in the five recommendations cited in Table 10. These recommendations focus on the training, development, and employment of officers serving in the CCF.

In conclusion, all research findings and subsequent recommendations indicate that the Marine Corps could most benefit from transitioning field grade CCF officers to a PMOS. The data analyzed confirms the impetus for conducting this research effort, that impermanent officer assignment to contracting detracts the Marine Corps' ability to efficiently perform its CCF mission.

APPENDIX A. ADDITIONAL SURVEY COMMENTS

The following are additional comments obtained at the end of survey respondent submissions.

“Too many Officers believe they are above awarding contracts themselves. I have seen Captains jump through hoops to get warrants not to support the command but only to build a resume. I don’t understand why we would train Officers in Contracting only to send them back to a Supply Officer billet, this is the biggest mistake I believe the Marine Corps is making with our Officers.”

“As a Marine, serving in the acquisition field our environment is rapidly changing in which, we (Marine Corps) need to make a hard invest or expand this field to support our Expeditionary roots. As you prepare your thesis can the 3006/3044 MOSs be sustain for the future? Our Marines are force multipliers in the acquisition field far better than the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Once your thesis is completed can you share it with the Marine Corps acquisition community? Lastly, SNCOs are the touch point to help in the process for OJT. Senior SNCOs are thinking on the strategic level and focusing on the overall concept of support.”

“There currently is not a training curriculum that prepares Marine Contracting personnel for deployed contracting. This causes the experienced KOs to be tasked repeatedly with deployments. The only incentive currently to stay Marine vice moving on to the civilian sector is a devotion to the Corps itself. The addition of 852 funds, NPS, and other programs has begun to move the field in the right direction for incentives; however, there is still a long way to go IOT keep Marines as active duty KOs.”

“The lack of a permanent officer corps to include LDO/WO options is a great hindrance to the field in general. This places great stress on the enlisted Marines to bridge the gaps. Normally this would not be a concern, but the lack of enough enlisted Marines exasperates the situation.”

“Both the retention issue needs to be addressed for both the enlisted and officers. However, I do not believe there are enough individuals who advocate for the career field. Many don’t fully understand the capability but know they need and want it so we to better educate our leadership.”

“I don’t believe the questions here are clear in intent, so I responded to the best of my interpretation. When asked what role an officer ‘could’ have, I assume you mean what role they ‘should’ have. Currently, the MOS is so short, that any officer ‘could’ fill any role, regardless of qualification or suitability.”

“I came into contracting to gain requisite education and experience to lat move into the Acquisition MOS and serve in a Program Management billet, but was denied that opportunity due to a combination of no senior leadership advocacy

and domination by those that had prior assignments at NAVAIR/SYSCOM. Based on the mismanagement of key leadership billets among officer, enlisted, and Civil/SCS and lack of advocacy within the USMC Contracting community, I had no incentive to return to contracting after one payback tour.”

“When I read the invitation I was hoping the survey, an analysis of transient officers in a rapidly changing acquisition environment, was going to shine a light on the three major issues impacting the 3006 MOS. Those being; 3006 is a secondary MOS, for over a decade we have not attended NPS, and LtCol is the highest rank attainable. I believe the questions IRT what roles could Capt/Maj/LtCol should/could have are missing the mark, as their rank will dictate their billets and their capacity and there is very little reintegration (if any) because no matter what your MOS is we are all marines and our green-side training is the same for everyone. Are you in the Marine Corps or the Navy/Army/Air Force? Don’t take that as an insult; I ask because you have an opportunity to positively impact the 3006 MOS and your questions are more broad-brushed than definitive. I graduated NPS in 2003 and with the exception of a 2-year command tour I have been in the MOS and have seen it go from struggling to where we are now; 34 billets with 14 gapped and 4 of 7 LtCol’s retiring by the end of next year. I could go into greater detail if you want to call. I can be reached at (redacted for privacy).”

“The best solution is to make a primary MOS. NMOS is not enough. Could be a WO/CWO/LDO track or model it after the acquisition PMOS (lat[eral] move etc). Bottom line: if the MC wants to really get serious about this career field, it needs a PMOS.”

“I would be interested in seeing the results of this survey.”

“The CVs I selected were not necessarily documented, they were the CVs that I believed are present within the workforce.”

APPENDIX B. 3006 T&R STANDARDS

3006 Training and Readiness Standards - NAVMC 3500.64B						
3006 officers must achieve proficiency in all training events listed below. 5NCO 3044s must achieve proficiency in all training events listed below as well except for the CONT-MNMT-2001.						
Event	Title	Interval (months)	Grades	E coded	Standard	Performance Steps
COS - Contracting Specialist						
CONT-COS-2001	Conduct pre-solicitation actions	24	Sgt - LtCol	No	To ensure purchase request complies with laws, regulations, policies, and authorized threshold IAW FAR.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review purchase request. 2. Validate purchase request. 3. Conduct market research. 4. Perform Acquisition planning. 5. Determine method of procurement. 6. Prepare justification and approval, when applicable. 7. Prepare determination and findings, when applicable. 8. Conduct legal reviews, when applicable. 9. Generate a solicitation.
CONT-COS-2002	Conduct post solicitation actions	24	Sgt - LtCol	No	To ensure purchase request complies with laws, regulations, policies, and authorized threshold IAW FAR.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine social economic requirements. 2. Determine contract type. 3. Post contract requirements. 4. Review contract offers. 5. Establish competitive range. 6. Revise final offers. 7. Prepare abstract. 8. Prepare pre-award notices. 9. Prepare determination and findings, when applicable. 10. Prepare justification and approval, when applicable. 11. Conduct legal review, when applicable.
CONT-COS-2003	Conduct pre-award actions	24	Sgt - LtCol	No	To ensure contract complies with laws, regulations, policies, and authorized threshold IAW FAR.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine contract requirement(s). 2. Determine Contracting Officer Representative (COR) requirements, when applicable. 3. Prepare contract forms. 4. Obtain appropriate approval. 5. Conduct legal review, when applicable. 6. Release contract.
CONT-COS-2004	Conduct post award actions	24	Sgt - LtCol	No	To ensure contract complies with laws, regulations, policies, and authorized threshold IAW FAR.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute contract. 2. Prepare contract actions report. 3. Issue contract actions report. 4. Conduct contract administration requirements. 5. Verify receipt of supplies/services. 6. Verify payment. 7. Conduct contract modifications, when applicable. 8. Conduct legal review, when applicable. 9. Issue delivery/task orders, when applicable. 10. Exercise options, when applicable. 11. Conduct Contracting Officer Representative (COR) audits, when applicable. 12. Conduct post award debrief, when applicable. 13. Conduct protest proceedings, when applicable. 14. Terminate/Cancel contract(s), when applicable. 15. Close contract. 16. Maintain contract file.
ICOS - Intermediate Contracting Specialist						
CONT-ICOS-2001	Perform Acquisition procedures	12	SSgt - LtCol	No	To ensure methodologies comply with laws, regulations, policies, and authorized threshold.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct pre/post solicitation reviews. 2. Review pre/post award actions. 3. Prepare pre-negotiation business clearance memorandums. 4. Conduct source selection procedures, when applicable. 5. Conduct negotiations, when applicable. 6. Issue awards. 7. Conduct debriefs. 8. Issue notices. 9. Facilitate post award conferences. 10. Execute stop work order, when applicable. 11. Execute change request orders, when applicable. 12. Request equitable adjustments. 13. Execute claim.
CONT-ICOS-2002	Prepare Unauthorized Commitment Packages	12	GySgt - LtCol	No	In order to establish ratification requirements.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review requirements. 2. Forward ratification to legal. 3. Identify ratification, if applicable. 4. Finalize ratification. 5. Reject ratification, when applicable. 6. Issue contract. 7. Return rejected documents to legal/customer, when applicable. 8. Perform post award actions, when applicable.

ADV - Advanced Contracting Specialist						
CONT-ADV-2001	Supervise Contingency Contract Specialist	24	Sgt - LtCol	No	To ensure contract procedures are adhered to IAW laws and regulations.	1. Assign task(s). 2. Review final documents. 3. Enforce plans, policies and procedures.
CONT-ADV-2002	Supervise contract operations	24	Sgt - LtCol	No	To ensure acquisition procedures are adhered to IAW laws and regulations.	1. Determine Acquisition requirements. 2. Review pre/post solicitation actions. 3. Review pre/post award actions. 4. Oversee Government Purchase Card (GPC) Program 5. Coordinate with internal/external agencies.
CONT-ADV-2003	Conduct contracting operations integration	24	Sgt - LtCol	No	To facilitate contracting functions and capabilities across the range of military operations.	1. Determine contract requirements. 2. Conduct liaison. 3. Confirm resource availability. 4. Task organize. 5. Provide contracting support, assessments and planning considerations. 6. Advise commander(s).
CONT-ADV-2004	Administer Field Ordering Officer (FOO) Program	24	Sgt - LtCol	No	In order to provide micro purchase support to internal/external agencies.	1. Establish Program. 2. Implement operating procedures. 3. Train personnel. 4. Appoint personnel. 5. Manage program. 6. Terminate FOO, when applicable.
CONT-ADV-2005	Perform Acquisition procedures	24	Sgt - LtCol	No	To ensure methodologies comply with laws, regulations, policies, and authorized threshold.	1. Conduct pre/post solicitation reviews. 2. Review pre/post award actions. 3. Prepare pre-negotiation business clearance memorandums. 4. Conduct source selection procedures, when applicable. 5. Conduct negotiations, when applicable. 6. Issue awards. 7. Conduct debriefs. 8. Issue notices. 9. Facilitate post award conferences. 10. Execute stop work order, when applicable. 11. Execute change request orders, when applicable. 12. Request equitable adjustments. 13. Execute claim. 14. Forward for legal review, when necessary. 15. Forward to higher headquarters, when necessary. 16. Perform contract close out.
CONT-ADV-2006	Prepare Unauthorized Commitment Packages	12	GySgt - LtCol	No	To determine ratification eligibility IAW FAR.	1. Review requirements. 2. Identify ratification, if applicable. 3. Forward ratification to legal. 4. Finalize ratification. 5. Reject ratification, when applicable. 6. Issue contract. 7. Return rejected documents to legal/customer, when applicable. 8. Perform post award actions, when applicable. 9. Forward to higher headquarters, when applicable.
EXPD - Expeditionary						
CONT-EXPD-2001	Perform expeditionary contracting duties	12	GySgt - LtCol	No	To provide operational contract support.	1. Review mission requirements. 2. Determine contracting support requirements. 3. Analyze internal/external contracting support sources. 4. Brief Commander. 5. Execute assigned mission.
MNMT - Management						
CONT-MNMT-2001	Manage contracting operations	12	Capt - LtCol	No	To ensure contract procedures are adhered to IAW laws and regulations.	1. Determine Acquisition requirements. 2. Validate pre/post solicitation actions. 3. Validate pre/post award actions. 4. Enforce plans, policies and procedures. 5. Conduct performance evaluation(s). 6. Review civilian selection process, when applicable. 7. Coordinate with higher headquarters, when required. 8. Coordinate with Human Resources, when applicable. 9. Supervise Government Purchase Card (GPC) Program. 10. Advise higher/adjacent headquarters. 11. Conduct internal audits.

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